

# **Task Force to Reimagine Policing in Brookline**

## **Final Report**



**Final Report unanimously adopted on February 26, 2021**

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# Executive Summary

## Abstract

Last summer, Americans filled the streets in cities across the country to protest police violence against African-Americans. The protests raised the question in communities everywhere, including in Brookline: does our police department treat all citizens equally, regardless of their race or ethnicity? And if not, how can we fix it?

Since the summer, and in line with the commitments made when we raised a Black Lives Matter banner outside Town Hall, the Task Force to Reimagine Policing in Brookline has sought answers to these questions. We have found both positive news – that overall the public is satisfied with the police – and alarming news – that Black and Latinx residents of Brookline feel discriminated against and fear being victims of police brutality at levels far higher than white residents.

Through our research, this Task Force has found disturbing patterns in traffic stops, wherein nonwhite motorists are not only disproportionately likely to be stopped but disproportionately likely to be ticketed when they are stopped.

Through our research, the Task Force has found that the Brookline Police is a constant presence in spaces in town where racial minorities are present. Without any public process, the Police Department and School Department agreed to have an armed School Resource Officer (SRO) stationed in Brookline High School. Without any public process or requirement by law, the Walk and Talk unit patrols Brookline's public housing and charges the Brookline Housing Authority for doing so.

Through our research, the Task Force is making several recommendations. Our community needs social services, but it needs them from trained social service professionals, not from police officers. We recommend closing down the SRO and Walk and Talk programs and creating a new social service department.

Where police are needed, we recommend greater oversight, transparency, and accountability. This proposal is grounded in our survey which shows that a super-majority (77%) of Brookline residents believe the Town should have a civilian oversight board with investigative powers.

## Background

There is a disturbing history of policing in America. From the days of slave patrols until today, policing has been used to exert control over people of color, immigrants and poor people. This history has been well-chronicled and is critical to understanding the need for reimagining. As a primer, we encourage you to read the New Yorker piece, [The Invention of Police](#).

More proximally, our Task Force was constituted as a direct result of the righteous multiracial, multigenerational uprising demanding greater oversight and accountability of police. This uprising followed the killings by police of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and so many other Black, Latinx and Indigenous people.

Those who have studied inequities in policing understand how even the best-intentioned reforms decade after decade have failed to make policing safe, just and equitable, especially for communities of color. The bottom line is that police reform has failed communities of color and therefore society as a whole. Reform alone has only a marginal impact, at best.

The current need for reimagining is not solely about what happened many years ago or a thousand miles away in Minneapolis or Louisville or Ferguson. This work necessarily focuses on policing right here in Brookline. It is also in response to the many discrimination complaints in Brookline – those that have been formally filed and the many more that have been shared in other ways – including by two of Brookline’s own, now former, Black police officers.

We understand that there are many people in this community who have only had good experiences with the Brookline Police Department, but, as one insightful commenter said at one of our public hearings, “Your good experience does not cancel out someone else’s bad experience.”

There is a certain human tendency to believe that something is not a problem because it has not been a problem for us. The eleven members of our Task Force do believe inequitable policing is a problem in Brookline, and we are not alone.

We are joined by Brookline’s Anyaosah family, whose daily peaceful protests along Route 9 brought hundreds of residents to join them and then hundreds more at protests across from the Brookline Police Department.

We are joined by Brookline’s Lexi Harriman, hundreds of BHS students, and thousands of residents and neighbors who took to the streets, peacefully, to share their stories of local issues with policing – right here in Brookline – demanding justice and accountability.

For anyone who attended these events and others like the Humanize Black Voices event led by young people on Cypress Field, the evidence is clear – yes, there is a problem here.

In June 2020, Brookline's Select Board in the midst of public outcry made a symbolic gesture, shifting \$166,000 in police overtime to other purposes related to social services. Soon after, Town Meeting rejected more substantive cuts to the police budget, with many citing the need to know more about how those funds could better be spent.

Select Board Member Raul Fernandez had, prior to the Select Board and Town Meeting votes, proposed a reimagining of policing and public safety more broadly. One that would explore, propose, and recommend investing in alternatives to policing, where appropriate.

There were several key tenets embedded in that proposal:

First, that a community holds the power to determine its own approach to community safety, which includes determining if and how police should be part of that approach.

Second, that there are members of our community and those in our neighboring communities for which Brookline's current model is simply not working. That is unacceptable.

Third, that police need to be held to the highest standards and we need clear accountability measures for what happens when officers fail to live up to those standards.

And finally, that this moment is an opportunity to rethink our relationship with police, yes, but also to reconsider how we invest in the long-term wellbeing of residents and neighbors.

Select Board Member Fernandez first shared that proposal publicly on June 3rd. After a contentious Town Meeting season and weeks of debate on the Select Board, the proposal for a Task Force to Reimagine Policing in Brookline, after first being rejected by the Select Board in its current form, later passed unanimously on July 21st.

The Select Board decided to create two bodies that night – a committee focused on reform, chaired by Select Board Chair Bernard Greene, and a task force focused on reimagining our approach to public safety, chaired by Select Board Member Fernandez.

### **Task Force Charge**

The Task Force to Reimagine Policing in Brookline was charged to explore and recommend new approaches to public safety and policing in Brookline, utilizing a data-informed approach to interrogate our current model and provide a distinctly alternative approach to public safety.

The eleven members of the group exceeded the criteria for diversity as outlined in the charge, that at least half would be people from communities disproportionately impacted by policing.

There were six members of color including one Latinx, two Asian, and three Black members, as well as five women, and one transgender member. Immigrants and one Brookline Housing

Authority resident were included among our members. As a group, we represented a wide variety of ages, identities, and experiences.

More information on the charge and members can be found in the appendix of the full report.

## **Process**

The Task Force held weekly meetings for six months, from August 28, 2020 to February 26, 2021. These meetings were all publicly noticed and held through Zoom due to the ongoing pandemic and live streamed by Brookline Interactive Group. Recordings of these meetings and our subcommittee meetings are available on our page on the Brookline website.

We arranged ourselves into five subcommittees, including:

- Envisioning / Community Engagement
- Departmental Analysis
- School Resource Officers
- Walk & Talk Unit
- Vulnerable People & People in Crisis

More information on the work of these subcommittees is available in the full report.

We sought community feedback and expert input in a number of ways. One was through a survey in partnership with Tufts University through which we sent invites to 25,000 Brookline residents and received 1,343 responses. We also held seven public hearings where we heard from scores of residents and received comments through email from many more. Task Force members also held numerous conversations with residents, content experts, elected officials, members of the police department, and other key stakeholders.

More details on our approach to community engagement is available in the Envisioning / Community Engagement subcommittee report as well as other subcommittee reports. Also included is the raw survey data as well as our full methodology, findings, and conclusions.

## **Survey Findings**

1. Brookliners generally have positive views of the police force. That said, Black and Latinx residents have had more negative experiences with the Brookline Police and would feel less comfortable than whites and Asians in calling the police if they needed help.
2. Compared to white residents, Black residents are *forty-eight times* more likely to feel discriminated against by police on the basis of race.



3. Respondents across racial groups perceive discrimination on the part of the Brookline Police department against Black and Latinx residents.
4. The majority of Brookline residents do not believe the department effectively holds its officers accountable.
5. There is widespread support for the Town utilizing social service workers rather than the police in scenarios where the risk of physical conflict is low.
6. A super-majority of Brookline residents (over three-quarters) believe the town should have a civilian oversight board with investigative powers.
7. Brookline residents overwhelmingly favor increasing police oversight, transparency, and accountability, while limiting their scope of duties and use of force powers.

### **Additional Findings**

1. There is no comprehensive vision for public safety provided by the Town or information on how Brookline works to ensure that public safety resources are delivered equitably.
2. What are characterized as “collaborative” efforts between the Police Department and other bodies often lack appropriate buy-in from the communities they claim to be collaborating with.
3. The Police Department has not been capturing all field interrogations or vehicle stops in the data presented in its annual reports. Logging those stops is at the discretion of the officer.
4. 86% of motorists stopped in Brookline are not Brookline residents.
5. Based on data provided by the Police Department and an analysis of traffic patterns provided by Brookline’s Transportation Administrator, we found that Black motorists are disproportionately more likely to be stopped by police.
6. Compared to white motorists, motorists of color – especially Asian Americans – are significantly more likely to receive tickets rather than warnings when they are stopped.
7. There are almost no stops where a simple stop (basic speeding, failure to signal) leads to getting a gun or a dangerous person off the streets in Brookline, dispelling one narrative used to support police conducting traffic enforcement.
8. Police units like the School Resource Officer and Walk & Talk units were established without any public process or measurable outcomes.

9. While police have been in Brookline schools dating back to the failed DARE program, an MOU between the Police and School departments was not signed until 2019. That agreement was signed by Police Chief Andrew Lipson and Interim Superintendent Ben Lummis – neither of whom are in those roles today.

10. Prior legislation did not require SROs to be located *within* schools, as is the case at BHS. Legislation passed in the State House at the end of 2020 has now eliminated the requirement for communities to have any School Resource Officers.

11. There has never been an MOU between the Brookline Housing Authority and the Town of Brookline since the founding of the Walk & Talk unit in 1992. This is despite annual \$15,000 payments being made from the BHA to the Police Department over many years,

12. While research shows that Crisis Intervention Team training is an effective program to teach police officers how mental health issues can impact crisis interventions, the impact of CIT training on changing police behaviors is largely unknown.

13. While there are community-based resources focused on mental health in Brookline, none of them focus on pre-crisis services, which comprehensively address underlying inequities.

Additional findings are continued in our subcommittee reports.

## **Recommendations**

Our recommendations envision a more innovative, forward-thinking Brookline. One focused on community-driven processes which are both respectful and supportive of low-income people and communities of color. One which increases police oversight, transparency, and accountability while limiting their scope of duties. One which shifts precious and limited resources away from programs that merely address the symptoms of inequities to investing in those that address the root causes of those inequities. One which affirms its responsibility and takes great pride in working collaboratively toward a just, safe, and equitable community.

## **Envisioning/Community Engagement**

The Task Force recommends that Brookline adopt a community-driven model of engagement, particularly focused on youth and traditionally under-engaged communities, by hosting smaller trust-building conversations and eliminating programs which provide more benefit to the Town than to these communities.

1. Implement a child-centric vision of Public Safety that (beyond Police and Schools) builds on the great work of departments like Recreation and Transportation and directs more funding to youth-centered programs.

2. Launch a website that provides a comprehensive vision for public safety and provides resources for the community.
3. Develop a community-driven model for safety and justice that centers the voices of the communities closest to public safety issues to identify priorities and generate solutions.
4. Eliminate community programs that are or may be perceived as one-way relationships, providing more benefit to Town departments than the community.
5. Rather than relying on public hearings as the primary approach for soliciting input, Brookline's boards should engage in more small group trust-building conversations.

### **Departmental Analysis**

The Task Force recommends reorienting the method by which the Town oversees the Police Department and provides input about current practices and new innovation. Citizen oversight must play a central role. Citizen input and oversight should occur both informally and formally. Based on continued evidence of racial bias in traffic enforcement, we are also recommending the filing of a Home Rule petition to permit traffic enforcement by civilians.

1. The Brookline Police Department should participate in a minimum of six public meetings annually in which residents can ask questions and offer suggestions.
2. The Brookline Select Board should appoint a permanent police oversight committee with the powers to investigate civilian complaints and approve mutual aid agreements, anti-bias training, and other major department policies.
3. The Brookline Police Department should conduct more data collection and analysis and communicate this data to the public. There should be more data collection and transparency about evaluations and promotions in relation to performance and training.
4. The Brookline Police Department mission statement should explicitly include an affirmation of equal treatment of all people, regardless of race or ethnicity. It should include a hyperlink to file a complaint.
5. Brookline should file a Home Rule petition in the state legislature to permit certain limited traffic enforcement functions to be fulfilled by civilians.

## **School Resource Officers**

The Task Force recommends removing School Resource Officers from schools. They are not trained educators and using them in service of educational purposes undermines the pillars of safety and community that are necessary for students to thrive in our schools.

1. The Brookline Select Board or School Committee should remove SROs from schools.
2. If these bodies are determined to keep the SRO positions, it must be after engaging in an authentic reauthorization process prior to the start of the 2021-22 school year.

## **Walk & Talk**

The Task Force recommends eliminating the Walk & Talk Unit. It is a relic of failed policies of the past which overpolice low-income communities, especially communities of color. It spends precious municipal dollars to provide some ancillary services to a handful of residents instead of investing those funds into directly addressing the critical needs of our residents.

1. The Brookline Select Board or BHA Board of Commissioners should eliminate the Walk & Talk Unit.
2. The Brookline Select Board should increase engagement with BHA residents to better understand the challenges they are facing and to collaboratively envision new solutions.
3. Develop a website that provides access to available social services and other resources and centralizes the community's advocacy and visioning work around public safety.

## **Vulnerable People & People in Crisis**

The Task Force recommends that the current model of police as first responders in nonviolent crisis interventions be replaced with a community-based crisis model like the successful CAHOOTS program, which is a decades-old success in Eugene, Oregon. This would add a well-trained civilian component to our crisis response model. This program would be managed through a new social services department that we are currently calling Brookline Forward.

1. The Brookline Select Board should enter into a consulting contract with CAHOOTS to develop a community-based crisis model that works best for Brookline.
2. Implement additional pre-crisis services to assist people in order to prevent crisis, and to support people who might be struggling with isolation, homelessness, mental health issues, and/or substance use.

3. Implement additional follow-up services to support people after a crisis occurs, including family supports, childcare options, housing supports and resources, vocational training, access to medical care, food security, etc.
4. Better publicize existing social services through a centralized Brookline website and a public education campaign.
5. Form a new social services department to coordinate existing Town services, partner with local agencies to enhance collaboration, and develop programs which address long-standing inequities in Brookline. A description of this department is on the next page.

### **Brookline Forward**

The Task Force proposes the creation of a new social service department in Brookline. It will address gaps in our social safety net that are currently being addressed through policing. The focus of this department would be to address the symptoms as well as the root causes of the inequities outlined below. The name Brookline Forward is a placeholder.

**Brookline Forward** will provide residents with the support they need to thrive. A new, innovative department of the Town of Brookline, Brookline Forward will partner with the Brookline Housing Authority, Public Schools of Brookline, Brookline Senior Center and local social service agencies to deliver timely, critical services, while conducting research, analyzing data, and implementing programs designed to counteract economic, health, and other inequities deeply rooted in racism, sexism, ageism, and other forms of oppression.

Brookline Forward will bring together existing offices under one umbrella including the:

- Office of Diversity, Inclusion & Community Relations;
- Council on Aging; and
- Office of Veterans' Services.

While establishing new offices including:

- Youth & Family Services;
- Community-Based Crisis Response;
- Immigrant & Refugee Services; and
- Economic Equity.

Brookline Forward will also provide staff support for the:

- Domestic Violence Roundtable;
- Commission for Women;

- Brookline Commission on Disability; and
- a new council on LGBTQIA+ Inclusion.

Brookline Forward will also partner with other Town departments as necessary to meet community needs. This includes working with Health & Human Services to develop a mental health incident response team, with the Building and Fire Departments to ensure residents are living in safe housing, and with the Police Department on diversion efforts for youth.

Brookline Forward will be funded by municipal dollars, including funds shifted from the Police Department, as well as local, state, and federal grants.

In addition to existing personnel, new staff at inception may include one administrative and three professional staff members as well as a new Commissioner to lead the department.

# **Survey: Public Attitudes about the Police Department in Brookline, Massachusetts**

**January 25, 2021**

## **Acknowledgments**

The data analyzed in this report comes from a study conducted by Professor Brian Schaffner of Tufts University. Professor Schaffner designed and administered the survey. The survey was approved by the Tufts University Institutional Review Board, which reviews research involving human subjects.

Professor Schaffner initially designed his study with the intent on surveying residents of Medford and Somerville. Upon learning of his study, the Select Board's Task Force to Reimagine Policing in Brookline asked Professor Schaffner to extend the study to Brookline. Brookline paid Tufts University \$15,000 to cover the costs of printing, postage, and labor to conduct the Brookline portion of the study.

After respondents submitted their answers to the survey questions, Professor Schaffner transmitted the raw, de-identified data file to Professor Eitan Hersh, who is political science professor at Tufts as well as a Brookline resident and member of the Task Force to Reimagine Policing in Brookline. Professor Hersh conducted the data analysis and wrote this report as part of his volunteer role on the Task Force.

## **Methodology**

Brookline residents were identified based on a town census file. Twenty-five thousand (25,000) individuals listed as adult residents of Brookline were sent a letter on Tufts University stationary. The letter contained an invitation to take an online survey. The letter contained a unique code so that only individuals who received letters could participate in the survey. In a handful of cases, individuals contacted a member of the Taskforce or Professor Schaffner and said they wanted to fill out the survey but they accidentally threw away the letter. In these cases, Professor Schaffner provided the individuals with their unique code.

In surveying residents, the sample was stratified in order to oversample African-Americans and Latinx residents. Professor Schaffner employed an algorithm that uses residents' names and Census blocks to estimate the probability that they are a member of various racial groups. Any resident whom the algorithm predicted has a 10 percent chance or greater of identifying as Black, Hispanic, or a race other than Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian was included in the sample. Asians were not oversampled because Asian identifiers make up a sufficiently large proportion of the town residents that many Asian residents would be solicited through random

sampling. In addition to the algorithm, Professor Schaffner sampled all residents living in addresses identified as part of the Brookline Housing Authority.

The oversample of public housing residents and residents predicted as not White and not Asian included 8,586 names. The remainder of the 25,000-person sample was a simple random sample of all other Brookline adult residents. Prior to mailing any residents, however, Professor Schaffner removed individuals who were listed according to public records as having moved out of Brookline. This was done through the U.S. Post Office's National Change of Address registry. Any resident who was listed as having moved was replaced in the sample by another resident randomly selected from town residents.

The mailers began arriving at the homes of Brookline residents on November 23, 2020. As of January 13, 2021, 1,343 individuals responded, yielding a response rate of 5.4%.

The final sample was weighted to be representative of Brookline adult residents. Professor Schaffner calculated propensity score weights to match the profile of adults according to their age, party affiliation, and precinct. A second stage of weighting used calibration raking to ensure that the sample was representative of Brookline residents on gender, race/ethnicity, and education (based on the most recent Census estimates).

## **Demographics**

Respondents were asked to identify their racial group. They could select one or more of the following categories: White; Hispanic, Latino/Latinx, or Spanish origin; Black or African American; Native American/American Indian/Indigenous or Alaskan Native; Asian; Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; Middle Eastern or North African; Another race, ethnicity, or origin.

Of 1,343 respondents in the sample (unweighted), 1,151 identify as white, 37 identify as Black, 57 identify as Latinx, 102 identify as Asian, 10 identify as Native American, 3 identify as native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 27 identify as Middle Eastern or North African, and 43 identify as other. Of those who identify as other, they were asked to enter text to describe their race. The majority of these individuals identify as Jewish. Others identify specific countries of origin (e.g. "Indian", "Brazilian"). Some respondents identify as more than one racial group.

For the purposes of this analysis, I will focus on those who identify in four racial groups. I define White as those who identify as White and do not identify with another racial group. I define Black as those who identify as Black or African American. I define Latinx as those who identify as Hispanic, Latino/Latinx, or Spanish origin. And I define Asian as those who identify as Asian.

Thirty-four percent (8,586/25,000) of the survey solicitations went either to residents of public housing or to individuals predicted to be in a non-Asian racial minority group based on their name and geography. Of the 1,343 respondents, 24.2% (326) come from this oversampled pool. Whereas 83% of respondents in the general sample identify as white, 70% of respondents in the oversample identify as white. Note again, that name-based oversample included anyone whose name suggested they had a 10% chance or more of being in a non-Asian minority group.



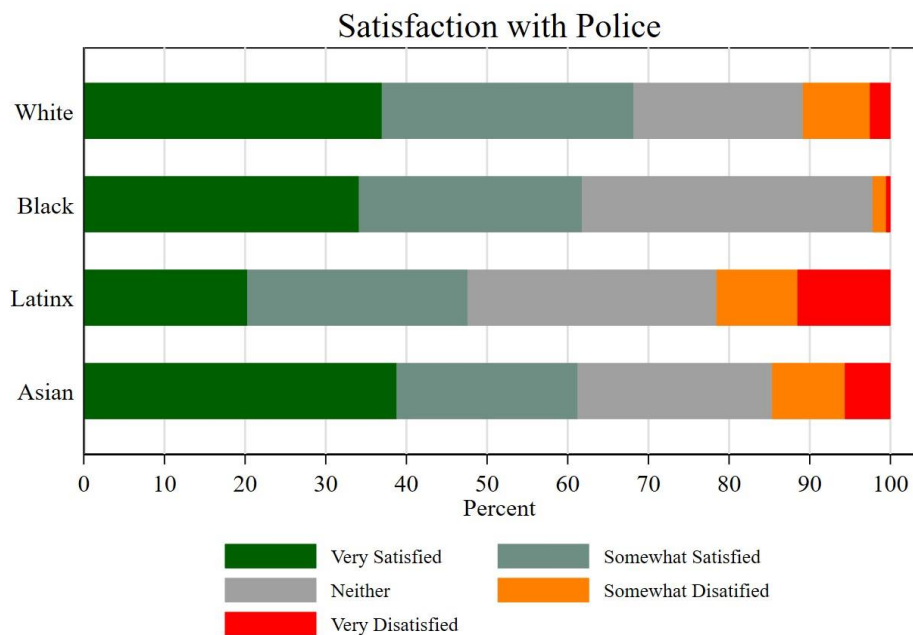
**Other demographics.** By gender, 53% of respondents identify as women, 46% identify as men, and 1% identify as other. By education, 94% of the respondents (again, unweighted) hold at least a bachelor's degree. By age, the median respondent is 52 years old. A quarter of the respondents are between 18-33. A quarter of the respondents are older than 66. 288 respondents report being the parent or guardian of a child under 18, and 237 of these respondents report having a child currently enrolled in school.

For the remainder of the report, I will utilize the weights to make the sample as representative of the town population as possible. Whereas the unweighted sample is 80% white, 3% black, 4% Latinx, 8% Asian, and 6% other, the weighted sample is 69% white, 4% black, 7% Latinx, 18% Asian, and 3% other.

### Overall Impressions

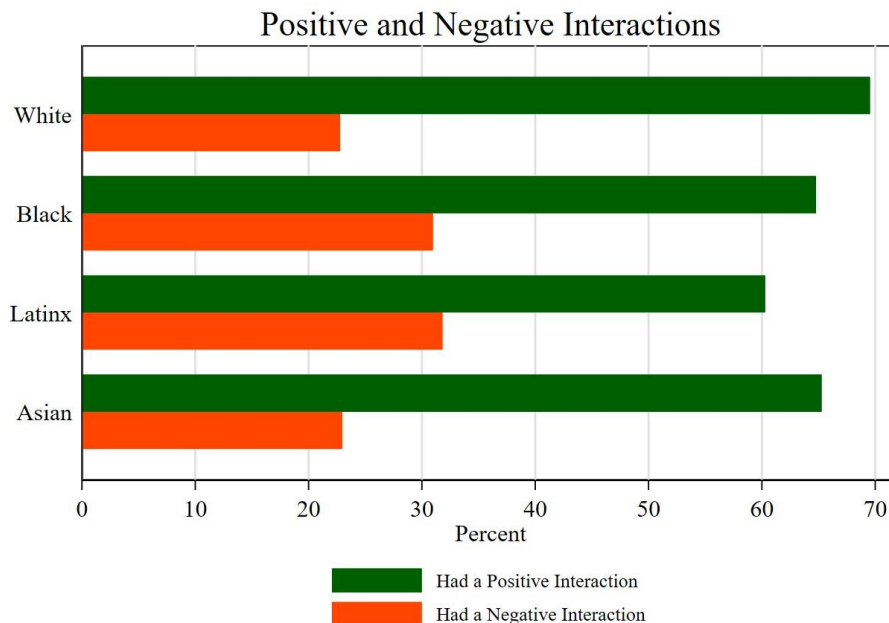
Respondents were asked about the overall satisfaction with the job done by the Brookline Police Department. Responses by racial group are displayed in Figure 1. Overall, 12% of the public is dissatisfied with the police department, compared to 65% who are satisfied. Across most racial groups, the majority of respondents are satisfied. The exception is Latinx identifiers, who hold the most negative views toward the police department. Over 20% of Latinx identifiers are somewhat or very dissatisfied with the police.

**FIGURE 1**



In Figure 2, respondents report whether they have ever had a positive experience and whether they have ever had a negative experience with the Brookline Police. Latinx and Black identifiers are 8-9 percentage points more likely to have had a negative interaction than Whites or Asians. They are also less likely to report having had a positive experience.

**FIGURE 2**



Respondents were separately asked if they have family members or friends who have had a negative experience with the Brookline Police. Twenty percent of white identifiers said yes. Similarly, 19% of Asians said yes. A higher rate of Blacks (25%) and Latinx (30%) said yes, that they have family or friends who have had a negative interaction with the Brookline Police.

Respondents were asked if language has been a barrier to communication with a Brookline police officer. Overall, just 1% of respondents said yes. But the rate is higher (5%) for Latinx identifiers.

The survey invited respondents to describe, in their own words, the positive and negative interactions they have had with the Brookline Police. Interested parties can find those individual responses in the public data file that accompanies this report.

Respondents were asked if the Brookline Police make them feel safe or unsafe. Of white respondents, 10% reported feeling somewhat or mostly unsafe. For black respondents, 4% respondents felt unsafe. For Asians, 7% reported feeling unsafe. A greater share of Latinx identifiers – 16% - reported that the Brookline Police make them feel somewhat or mostly unsafe.

Respondents were asked if they would feel comfortable calling the Brookline Police if they needed help. Two thirds of White (65%) and Asian (65%) identifiers reported they would be very

comfortable. Only 48% of African-Americans and 52% of Latinx respondents said they'd be very comfortable.

Respondents were asked for the impression of how effective the Brookline Police are in various roles. Those roles include (1) ensuring public safety, (2) fighting crime, (3) making residents feel safe, (4) holding police officers accountable, and (5) developing relationships with members of the community.

Overall, Brookline residents believe the Police Department is effective at ensuring public safety (91% agree), effective at making residents feel safe (88% agree), and effective at fighting crime (91% agree). Sixty-eight percent believe the Department effectively builds relationships with the community. However, the majority of respondents (58%) do not believe the Brookline Police is effective at holding officers accountable.

### **Recent Interactions with the Police**

The frequency of interaction with the Police Department varies considerably by racial identity, with African-Americans reporting the most interactions. Respondents were asked how many times in the past year they interacted *informally* with the Police Department regarding something other than criminal activity. For white respondents, 46% answered none. For Asian respondents, 53% reported none. For Latinx respondents, 64% reported none. And for Black respondents 28% reported none.

More than a third of African Americans (37%) reported five or more informal interactions with the police in the last year, compared to 12-14% for Asians and Whites, and 4% for Latinx respondents.

Black respondents were slightly more likely than other racial groups to report contacting the Brookline Police in the past year to report criminal or suspicious activity. Among residents of all racial groups, 15% of respondents said they called the Police to report criminal/suspicious behavior. This includes 15% for white respondents, 12% for Asian respondents, 16% for Latinx respondents and 24% for Black respondents.

Respondents were asked whether Brookline police officers have ever physically struck them, handcuffed them, tasered them, pointed a gun at them, restrained them on the back of a car, pushed them to the ground, used tear gas on them, or searched their car/residence without permission. These occurrences are very rare and are concentrated in Black and Latinx identifiers. Whereas 1% of white respondents and 2% of Asian respondents reported these interactions, 5% of Latinx respondents and 6% of Black respondents reported them. The most common of the occurrences, though still rare, are reports of being handcuffed and having one's car or residence searched without permission.

## **Perceptions of Discrimination**

Survey respondents were asked if they ever felt discriminated against by the Brookline Police on account of (1) race, (2) gender, (3) sexuality, (4) economic status, (5) religion, and (6) ability to speak English. Overall, 3% of respondents feel that the Brookline Police have discriminated against them on the basis of race or gender, 1% on the basis of sexuality, 2% on the basis of economic status, and less than one percent on the basis of religion or the ability to speak English.

However, responses vary considerably by racial group, particularly with respect to perceived discrimination on the basis of race, gender, and economic status.

Essentially no White identifiers (0.5%) feel they have been discriminated against by the Brookline Police Department on account of their race. In comparison, 5% of Asians, 12% of Latinx, and 24% of Black respondents report they have felt discriminated against by the Brookline Police on account of their race.

African-American respondents are significantly more likely to feel discriminated against on the basis of gender, with 7% reporting feeling this way. That compares to 3% for White and Latinx respondents, and 1% for Asians.

African-American respondents are far more likely to feel discriminated against on the basis of economic status. While 13% of African-Americans perceive economic discrimination by Brookline Police, only 2% of Whites and Asians and 3% of Latinx respondents report feeling this way.

When asked if they ever feel worried about being the victim of police brutality, 2% of White respondents say somewhat or very often, 6% of Asians report somewhat or very often, 22% of Latinx respondents say somewhat or very often, and 35% of Black respondents report somewhat or very often.

When asked if they believe that the Brookline Police “equitably serve the interest of all people, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, citizenship status or class,” the respondents are split evenly, with 49% reporting yes and 51% reporting no. Black and Asian respondents are more likely to agree with this statement, with 56% of Blacks and 57% of Asians believing the police serve all equitably, whereas fewer Whites (47%) and Latinx (43%) believe the police serve all equitably.

## **Perceived Racial Discrimination – in-group and out-group**

Respondents were asked if they thought that four racial groups – White, Black, Hispanic, Asian – were treated fairly or unfairly by the Brookline Police Department. One percent of respondents thought Whites were treated unfairly. Fourteen percent of respondents thought Asians were treated unfairly. Perceived unfair treatment against Latinx and Black people was much higher.

Thirty-seven percent of respondents thought that Hispanics are treated unfairly by the Brookline Police. Latinx respondents themselves were far *more likely* than any other racial group to report unfair treatment. That is, 48% of Latinx respondents perceived unfair Brookline Police treatment of Hispanics, compared to 37% of Whites, 32% of Blacks, and 33% of Asians perceiving unfair treatment of Hispanics.

The racial group most viewed as being the recipient of unfair treatment by the Brookline Police is African-Americans. In total, 45% of respondents believe the Brookline Police treats Black people unfairly. However, Black respondents themselves are least likely to perceive this, with 34% reporting unfair treatment. In comparison, 46% of whites, 53% of Latinx, and 42% of Asians perceive unfair treatment toward African-Americans by the Brookline Police.

### **Complaint Process**

If they have a complaint about a police officer, would respondents know how to file a complaint? For most respondents (63%), the answer is no. Sixty to seventy percent of Whites, Latinx, and Asians report not knowing how to file a complaint. However, a majority of Black respondents (58%) report knowing how to file a complaint.

Would respondents feel comfortable filing a complaint? Most (59%) say yes. Comfort level ranges from 47% of Asians feeling comfortable, 60% of Whites and 63% of Latinx feeling comfortable to 72% of African-Americans feeling comfortable.

### **Children and School**

Parents and guardians of children under 18 were asked about the relationship between their children and the Brookline Police. They were asked: "Thinking about your oldest child under the age of 18, how comfortable would you say they are with the police?" Of the 231 respondents who answered this question (because they have kids under 18), 77% report their child is comfortable with the police, 4% said their child is uncomfortable, and 18% report neither comfortable nor uncomfortable.

Of parents with children in schools, 14% report that law enforcement officers are stationed in the school, 47% say officers are not stationed at the school, and 39% are not sure. Of those reporting that officers are stationed in their child's school, 79% report being comfortable with the officer's presence, 13% report being uncomfortable, and 7% are neither comfortable nor uncomfortable. Of respondents with children, only 2% report the child involved in a disciplinary action involving the police.

## **Methods of policing**

### ***Which methods should be permissible?***

What tactics should the Brookline Police be permitted to use in order to ensure public safety? Respondents were asked about several tactics and asked if they approved of their use by the police. These include pepper spray, physical strength (hand control), choke holds, impact weapons (batons), tear gas, tasers, restraint devices (handcuffs and zip ties), K-9 dog bite-and-hold, beanbag munitions (rubber bullets), and firearms.

A clear majority of Brookline residents only supports two of these methods as being permitted by police: physical strength (74% support) and restraints such as handcuffs (87%).

Respondents are fairly evenly split on pepper spray (52% support) and tasers (52% support). Forty-three percent support the use of firearms, 37% support the use of impact weapons, 32% support rubber bullets, 29% support K-9, 23% support tear gas, and 5% support choke holds. Support for these various tactics vary by racial groups. African-American respondents show the *highest support* for most of these tactics. Black respondents are less likely (3% vs 9%) as the full sample to believe that the Brookline police should use none of these tactics. Latinx respondents are more likely (16% vs 9%) to believe Brookline police should use none of these tactics.

### ***Methods to reduce deadly force***

What tactics would reduce interactions with police that result in deadly force? Respondents were asked to consider nine tactics. Respondents thought several tactics would be quite effective. Having officers attend de-escalation training is something that 91% of the public thought would be effective. Having officers wear body cameras was thought to be effective by 88% of respondents. Eighty-seven percent thought banning chokehold would be effective. And 84% believe diversifying the ranks of the Brookline Police Department would be effective.

A majority of respondents also believe that ending the federal program that sends military surplus equipment to police departments (71%), racial bias training (77%), and educating police officers about the history of police departments (59%) would all be effective at reducing interactions that result in deadly force.

The survey asked about two bigger reforms as well: reducing the police department's funding by at least 10% and abolishing the police department altogether. Respondents largely do not believe these are effective tactics. A third (34%) believe reducing funding would be effective and 15% believe that abolishing the police department would be effective.

In line with perceptions of policing methods, African-American respondents are least likely to support ideas like abolishing the police department (8% believe this would be effective at avoiding deadly force), and Latinx are most likely to support the idea (26% support). White respondents (15%) and Asian respondents (15%) are in the middle.

### ***Circumstances better handled by social workers***

In some situations, it is possible for either police or social service workers (e.g. social workers, mental health professionals) to respond to a public need. Respondents were asked to consider seven scenarios and think about whether the scenario is better suited to police response or social service worker response.

In two of the scenarios, one in which an individual is armed and one in which there is a robbery or theft, the public has a clear preference for police. In the case of a robbery, 97% say the police would be the right response. In the case of an armed individual, 92% list the police. Another 7% list police as well as social service workers should respond to the call.

In other scenarios, the public's preference favors social service workers over the police. For instance, in responding to a situation with a person who is intoxicated or has overdosed, 28% think the police should respond, 58% think social service workers should respond, and 14% think both should respond.

In responding to someone experiencing a mental health crisis or is suicidal, 4% think the police should respond, 83% think social service workers should respond and 12% think both should respond. In dealing with a homeless person, 5% think the police should respond, 88% think a social service worker should respond, and 8% think both should respond. In dealing with a dispute among neighbors or a disorderly minor, 23% think police should respond, 64% think a social service worker should respond, and 13% think both should respond. In dealing with a case of domestic violence or abuse, 42% think the police should respond, 26% think social service workers should respond, and 31% think both should respond.

In most of these scenarios, particularly those that are noncriminal, the public overwhelmingly favors social service workers responding rather than police. In most cases (domestic violence, neighbor dispute, homeless, intoxication), African-Americans in the sample have stronger pro-police preferences than other racial groups.

### ***Police Budget***

Brookline taxpayers spend \$17 million on the police department each year, or 5.6% of the town's budget. Respondents were informed of these statistics and asked if they think the budget should be increased, decreased, or kept the same.

Overall, 11% of respondents thought the budget should be increased, 45% thought the budget should be kept the same, and 45% thought the budget should be decreased.

Among white respondents, 44% think the budget should be decreased and 10% think it should be increased. Among Black respondents, 39% think the budget should be decreased and 25% think it should be increased. Among Latinx, 63% think it should be decreased and 6% think it should be increased. Among Asians, 41% think the budget should be decreased and 11% think it should be increased.

## **Oversight**

Some communities have oversight committees in which residents review police actions and evaluate complaints against the department. Respondents were asked if they think Brookline should consider having a civilian oversight board of this kind. Of all respondents, 77% said yes, 7% said no, and 16% said they were not sure.

The survey respondents would like this committee to have some roles but not others. Some 87% would want the committee to be able to investigate allegations of excessive force and abuse. And 76% would like the committee to have the power to investigate police shootings. A clear majority also want the committee to have the power to set policing priorities (66%) and to evaluate the disciplinary process against officers who are in violation of laws or policies (68%).

For other roles, the majority of Brookline residents oppose or have more mixed views. Only 17% would grant such a committee power to hire officers and 38% would grant the commission the power to fire police officers. Just over half (52%) would favor the committee setting police policies, such as the use of force policy. About a quarter (29%) favor the committee empowered to negotiate police contracts.

### ***Additional measures for transparency***

Respondents were asked if they support measures that would increase transparency in the Brookline Police Department's operations. Would they support making public "the details of the department's internal process in addressing violations of conduct and crimes committed by officers?" 81% of Brookline residents agree. Would they support a public listing of all complaints against Brookline officers and disciplinary actions taken in response to complaints? 76% of Brookline residents agree. Would they support making a public listing of all weapons carried by each patrol unit? 57% of Brookline residents disagree. Would they support including community members in the process of investigating police misconduct? 76% agree.

## **Conclusions**

This survey, based on the recorded responses of over 1,300 residents of Brookline, identifies a clear set of problems with respect to the Brookline Police department and a clear direction for the future.

To be sure, the Brookline public has generally positive views of the police force. That stated, African American and Latinx residents have had more negative experiences with the Brookline Police and would feel less comfortable than whites and Asians in calling the police if they needed help.

It is very rare for white residents of Brookline to feel discriminated against by the Brookline police, on the basis of race or gender or economic status. But perceptions of discrimination along these lines are common among minority residents, especially African Americans. Compared to white residents, Black residents are twice as likely to feel discriminated against by



the Brookline Police on the basis of gender, eight times more likely to feel discriminated against on the basis of economic conditions, and *forty-eight times* more likely to feel discriminated on the basis of race.

African American and Latinx residents are, respectively, 17 times more likely and 11 times more likely than white residents to worry about being a victim of police brutality.

Respondents across racial groups perceive discrimination on the part of the Brookline Police department against Black and Latinx residents. Half of the respondents do not believe the Brookline police treats all citizens equitably. While almost no respondents believe that the Brookline Police treats white residents unfairly, 14% believe Asians are treated unfairly, 37% believe Hispanics are treated unfairly, and 45% believe African Americans are treated unfairly.

The majority of Brookline residents do not believe the department effectively holds its officers accountable.

The survey has shown widespread support for efforts to limit the use of deadly force by the Brookline police. The survey shows widespread support for the town utilizing social service workers rather than the police in scenarios where the risk of physical conflict is low. A super-majority of Brookline residents (over three-quarters) believe the town should have a civilian oversight board with investigative powers.

# Envisioning and Community Engagement Subcommittee Report

## I. Introduction

### A. Mission

The envisioning and community engagement subcommittee was formed to assess and engage the Brookline community on its perspectives, attitudes, needs, and wants regarding public safety. The charge of this subcommittee is to ensure that the attitudes and perspectives of both white residents and residents from communities of color are thoughtfully included in the recommendations, applying a racial equity lens to analysis of current practices and recommendations for improvement.

### B. Members

Bonnie Bastien  
Malcolm Cawthorne  
Eitan Hersh  
Chi Chi Wu  
Kristan Singleton, subcommittee chair

## II. Acknowledgements

Discussions of policing and public safety rightfully surface strong emotional responses. For some, the discussions can activate memories of recent or distant trauma. For others, the discussions can raise the prospect of loss of protection or security from trusted public institutions and systems. Throughout its tenure, our subcommittee was specifically focused on the principle *that no one wants their safety taken away* and sought insights from the community to help us make recommendations that are consistent with that principle.

As a subcommittee, we would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the following individuals and groups:

**Residents in units of the Brookline Housing Authority** for sharing generously of their time in “Go Small” conversations to help us understand some of their perspectives on policing and public safety in Brookline.

**Brookline for Racial Justice and Equity (BRJE)** and **Brookline Budget Justice (BBJ)** for assisting the subcommittee in piloting and refining the discussion protocol for our “Go Small” conversations.

**Officer David Pilgrim** of the *Walk & Talk* Unit and **Lieutenant Jennifer Paster** of the *Community Service Division* of the Brookline Police Department for helping us to understand the department’s community service focus and priorities.

**Former Chief of Police Dan O’Leary** for connecting us with resources and materials within the Brookline Police Department

**Alicia Adamson**, Director of the Brookline Teen Center for speaking with us about their programs and needs to serve the children of Brookline

**Leigh Jackson**, Director of Brookline Recreation for speaking with us about their programs and needs to serve the children of Brookline

### **III. Insights from the Town Survey on Policing**

The Task Force for Reimagining Policing conducted the survey and analysis “Public Attitudes about the Police Department in Brookline, Massachusetts” to inform its work in making recommendations to the Town of Brookline and the Select Board. As a brief recap of the design of the policing survey and its methodology, 25,000 Brookline residents were sent a survey via postal mail starting on 11/23/2020. Of the 25,000 residents selected for inclusion in the survey, one third of the people selected to receive the survey were targeted as likely Black, Latinx, or “Other” (meaning non-white or non-Asian). [In the survey, the racial group descriptors used were White, Black, Asian, or Hispanic; in summarizing the findings we will use the descriptors White Black, Asian, or Latinx.] This “oversampling” method was implemented by targeting residents in locations managed by the Brookline Housing Authority and by using a name-matching algorithm to identify people of color.

Based on the final reported results of the survey for four racial groups, of the 1,343 residents responding roughly 3% of the respondents identified as Black, 86% identified as White, 4% identified as Latinx, and 8% identified as Asian. These results are generally consistent with the Town demographics for the percentage of residents who identify as Black and are under-representative of the percentage of residents who identify as Asian. The final demographics of the survey respondents were disappointing in its ability to obtain representative perspectives on policing from Asian residents and as a subcommittee we were disappointed that the specific oversampling methods deployed were not successful in helping the Town solicit the perspectives of higher numbers of Black and Latinx residents.

Overall, most respondents in the survey reported feeling very or somewhat satisfied with Brookline police. The exception to this pattern were Latinx respondents: over 20% of Latinx identifiers are somewhat or very dissatisfied with the police (see Figure 1).

While all racial groups reported having had positive interactions with the police, Black and Latinx respondents were most likely to have experienced negative interactions with the Brookline police and were up to 30% more likely to have had a negative interaction with police (see Figure 2).

Black and Latinx respondents were far more likely to answer that they feel worried about being the victim of police brutality compared to White and Asian respondents (Black:35%, Latinx:22%; Asian: 6%; White: 2%). And while two-thirds (65% of) White and Asian respondents would feel very comfortable calling the Brookline Police if they needed help, less than half (48%) of Black respondents and about half (52%) of Latinx respondents would feel very comfortable doing the same.

Among people who hold an opinion on the various roles that police play in the community, 91% of survey respondents reported that they felt the Brookline police were effective at ensuring public safety. However only 68% of respondents felt that Brookline police were effective at building relationships in the community. And only 42% reported feeling that police officers could be held accountable for community complaints and concerns.

When asked about recent informal interactions (within the past 12 months) with Brookline police about things other than criminal activity, survey data indicates that Black residents are more likely to have interactions with police officers (37%) compared to other racial groups (White:13%; Asian: 13%; Latinx: 4%).

The survey questions about perception of discrimination can help us understand the climate in which the Brookline police are operating in efforts to perform effective community engagement. These questions on the survey were not intended to gauge residents' perceptions of discrimination among police in general; they sought residents' perceptions on discrimination specifically about the Brookline police. Survey results indicate that perceptions of discrimination are highest among Black respondents (27%) and, predictably, lowest among White respondents (0.5%).

Respondents were asked if they thought that four racial groups – White, Black, Hispanic, Asian – were treated fairly or unfairly by the Brookline Police Department. One percent of respondents thought Whites were treated unfairly. Fourteen percent of respondents thought Asians were treated unfairly. Perceived unfair treatment against Latinx and Black people was much higher. Thirty-seven percent of respondents thought that Hispanics are treated unfairly by the Brookline Police. Latinx respondents themselves were far more likely than any other racial group to report unfair treatment. That is, 48% of Latinx respondents perceived unfair Brookline Police treatment of Hispanics, compared to 37% of Whites, 32% of Blacks, and 33% of Asians perceiving unfair treatment of Hispanics. The racial group most viewed as being the recipient of unfair treatment by the Brookline Police is African-Americans. In total, 45% of respondents believe the Brookline Police treats Black people unfairly.

Roughly one-third or higher of the respondents across racial groups reported knowing how to file complaints if they had a negative experience with Brookline police, with Black reporting the highest levels of familiarity with the complaint process at 58% (White: 38%; Latinx: 37%; Asian: 30%).

Black respondents also report feeling comfortable filing complaints at the highest rates, with 72% indicating that they would feel comfortable filing a complaint following a negative experience with a police officer (Latinx: 63%; White: 60%; Asian: 47%).

Survey responses point to some important work to be done relating to public trust and transparency:

- 82% of respondents are in support of the police department being required to provide more detail on processes related to addressing violations of conduct and crimes committed by officers
- 72% support improvements in making information about complaints against police officers more public as well as any disciplinary actions in response to those complaints
- 77% support including community members in processes of investigation of police misconduct

The survey also asked what methods Brookline Police be permitted to use in order to ensure public safety. Only two methods had widespread support: physical strength (74% support) and restraints such as handcuffs (87%). Respondents are fairly evenly split on pepper spray (52% support) and tasers (52% support), while only a minority (43%) support the use of firearms, 37% support the use of impact weapons, 32% support rubber bullets, 29% support K-9, 23% support tear gas, and only a mere 5% support choke holds.

#### **IV. Community Engagement Themes Across the Task Force**

Ultimately, the work of all of the subcommittees surfaces issues related to community engagement for the Town. The following is a summary of issues and concerns that were raised across the breadth of the work of the Task Force. While the recommendations of this subcommittee do not address all of the issues, we believe it is important for them to be surfaced so the Town can work comprehensively on its subsequent community engagement strategies.

##### **Departmental Analysis**

The Departmental Analysis subcommittee focused on how to structurally ensure there is ongoing community engagement between the police and the civilian population. The subcommittee asked the questions: How do we ensure that there is a constant effort to raise, analyze and rethink problematic issues and potential reforms? What structures are in place for constant re-evaluation and stakeholder input? Ultimately the Department Analysis subcommittee made recommendations for both informal citizen input, such as a minimum of six public meetings annually, and a formal civilian oversight committee.

##### **School Resource Officers**

In partnership between BPD, PSB and the SRO, we are asking for the removal of all SROs in PSB school buildings. If the Select Board and School Committee are determined to have SROs in PSB school buildings, a full audit and accounting of the places where it is currently using SROs or anticipates that it might use SROs in its curriculum. This would identify what other educator and community resources were considered to support the educational, social, and emotional needs of students and why the services of the town police department are a better choice to meet those student needs. This would also require a convening with both student and parent support and advocacy groups; the Brookline Asian American Family Network (BAAFN), METCO, and Steps to Success to name a few. These discussions will seek caretaker, guardian and parental feedback for the anticipated design of its school-police partnerships. Furthermore, this community engagement should include community organizations like Brookline for Racial Justice and Equity (BRJE), Unitarian Universalist First Parish in Brookline and the Commission for Diversity, Inclusion and Community Relations when vetting the design and anticipated benefits of community partnerships based in schools. Finally, there needs to be a public or transparent evaluation of the program. This should include measures of inclusion in the respected schools faculty and staff, data collection in terms of police contact outside of class with students and families, and the BPD role in building and establishing equity in the nine schools of Brookline.

## **Walk & Talk**

It was difficult to find BHA residents who were willing to discuss the Walk & Talk (W&T) program with the subcommittee. This is in part because it took time for the subcommittee to find the right approach, but also because there is fear that sharing concerns or issues about the W&T program or the BPD in general could lead to consequences from the Brookline Housing Authority or the Police Department. We were able to interview BHA and former BHA residents after switching to a more 1:1 conversation strategy. While there was praise for the program in one of those conversations, what is being heard from the Black and brown BHA residents that were willing to be interviewed is that the violent history of policing in general, which Brookline is a part of, has created an indelible anxiety and fear in many members of black, brown, and poor communities. As evidenced by the Task Force survey, it is perceived by 58% of residents across all communities in Brookline, not only in BHA, that the Brookline Police Department, like all other police departments, is not able to hold themselves accountable when wrongdoing occurs. The Brookline Police Department carries this history in the work they do despite their best efforts.

## **Vulnerable Populations & People in Crisis**

The Vulnerable People and People in Crisis (VPPC) subcommittee has not had the opportunity to hear from residents with lived experience of crisis support interventions in Brookline. In an interview with the VPPC subcommittee, senior staff members of the Brookline Center for Community Mental Health (BCCMH) expressed the need for increased community-based services and support to help reduce or prevent crisis interventions before they occur. BCCMH staff stated that while the Brookline Police Department is “better trained than many,” such community-based services are best provided by social service workers and not by the police. The BCCMH staff expressed strong support of the Town creating such new non-police community-based services and stated that they look forward to collaborating with the Town as these new programs and services are developed.

## **V. Our Understandings of BPD Community Engagement**

Based on discussions during the larger Task Force meetings, discussion with the Community Policing team, and a review of public materials on the BPD website, our perspective is that BPD’s community engagement work falls into four areas:

- Officer Commendations
- Citizen Complaint Process
- Presence in the Brookline community
- Social Media Interactions

Officer commendations provide opportunities for town residents and visitors to share their satisfaction with the BPD and the services provided by BPD officers. Commendations can be submitted [online](#), via mail, or email.

The citizen complaint process is structured in accordance with the June 7, 2017 revised complaint review and disciplinary procedure and the October 2019 recommendations for

changes to the police complaint policy. The complaint process provides an opportunity to specify the timing and details related to incidents where a person feels that “a police officer or officers acted wrongly” (per the complaint process overview). The complaint process involves an online, in-person, or mail-based submission of a complaint to the BPD, a police command officer interview to discuss the details of the complaint, and if the matter was not resolved during the interview stage, a subsequent investigation.

BPD prioritizes and maintains an active presence in Brookline. Annual reviews provided on the BPD website show that BPD’s community activities range from community training sessions intended to “demystify policing”, to seasonal activities in the community, academic initiatives, and athletic leagues. (See the “Annual Reports” section of the website for access to the year in review documents that provide more detail on BPD presence in the Brookline community).

BPD maintains an active presence on social media via Facebook (@brooklinemapd), Instagram (@brooklinemapd), Twitter (@BrooklineMAPD ) and YouTube accounts.

## **VI. Recommendations**

Our work and our findings as a subcommittee coalesce around five primary themes that serve as our recommendation to the Town:

1. Implementing A Child-centric Visions of Public Safety
2. Public Safety Website - Needs for Continuing the Work
3. Community Engagement Not Community Policing
4. Eliminating Unintended One-Way Relationships
5. Going Small - Trust-Building Community Conversations

### **Youth-Centered Visions of Public Safety**

*“It’s easier to build strong children than repair broken men” - Frederick Douglass (1855)*

When thinking about public safety, children should be centered in our thinking. What this means is that the Town should center its thinking around keeping children active, supervised, enriched and thriving. This should begin with the things Brookline already has in place. This thinking should include the Brookline Police Department (BPD) but should not be limited to BPD or expected to be provided or furnished by BPD. This should also be planned in relation to school hours in the idea of enhancing or enriching school experiences for Brookline’s children.

The Brookline Recreation Department serves many children in our community. In speaking with the Director, Leigh Jackson, she mentioned many things that would help the Town better serve its children. The first idea was to provide more funding for transportation. In particular, the opportunity to bring Brookline Rec to different neighborhoods and communities within the Town. Brookline does a great job with children once they get to Brookline Rec spaces but COVID has exacerbated a problem that had been present before March 2020: there are children who can’t get to the Brookline Rec sites. Her plan is to create opportunities for Brookline Rec to be mobile to meet the needs of the Town’s children.

This would mean an increase in their transportation budget. We also think there should be monies budgeted to help transport Brookline's children to get to Brookline Rec sites for free, supervised activities; skating or sledding at Larz Anderson in the winter, swimming at the Brookline Pool (Evelyn Kirrane Aquatic Center - or old school folks called it "The Tank"), or using all of the indoor and outdoor resources at Tappan/Cypress, Soule and Eliot/Warren.

We also need to think about ways to be responsible for our children until they are at least 18. The Brookline Teen Center is for any teen who goes to school or lives in Brookline but is serving mostly children of color. This is an important space for these children of color, but we wonder where the White teens are. One might conclude that White teens have things that keep them fulfilled or White teens may need this space and don't feel the space is for them; it's abnormal for White teens in Brookline to feel like a space does not belong to them. Alicia Adamson, Director of the Brookline Teen Center (BTC), expressed a need to broaden services and activities to broaden who attends the BTC. She has the staff to provide programming and activities, however she needs at least three more staff members to provide social and emotional support for the teens that frequent the BTC. This need would be fulfilled by adding therapists and social workers to do both one-on-one and group services for the teens full time. This could be partially provided by the BTC but the Town should partner to help meet the needs of the children who attend the BTC. We do have shared expenses models that have worked successfully in Brookline. The Brookline Resilient Youth Team (BRYT) works with students at BHS that have had long or chronic illnesses where a significant amount of school time is missed. This program has a shared cost between the Brookline Mental Health Center and Brookline Public Schools (PSB) and is seen as a national example for student support. The Steps To Success program works with students and families that live in Brookline Public Housing. This program fundraises for itself and has a partnership between Brookline Housing Authority and PSB to provide comprehensive support for their students. These examples are ways where the Town has worked with an external agency or two different Town Departments to help meet the needs of Brookline's youth. This too can be done with the Town and BTC. It is short sighted to only use PSB monies to bring the services needed by Brookline's children.

Lastly, the Town should make sure they are investing and working with youth programs in Town that show an investment in Brookline's children. This could come in the way of some cost benefits to being in Brookline if those organizations granted scholarships for children to participate in their programming. This could be a one time event or a program that takes time. For example, a Dance Studio could offer full scholarships for "x" number of children for six weeks of lessons in exchange for "x" number of employees to have a pass that exempts them from parking meter fees during the Dance Studio's hours of operation.

These things would need to be encouraged, published and shared widely with the purpose of providing Brookline's children with as many opportunities for healthy and lively activities to build up our children while moving them toward adulthood.



## **Developing and Sustaining the Public Safety Website**

“Public safety” is a construct that exists in the Town’s budgeting and expenditure analysis processes (defined as police, fire, and building), but few other places. For example, the page on the Town website devoted to public safety contains no narrative and only two hyperlinks; one to the Brookline Police and one to the Brookline Fire Department. There is no presentation of a comprehensive vision for public safety. There is no summary of the resources that the Town seeks to deploy to maintain and improve public safety. Furthermore, there is no framing for how the Town works to ensure that public safety is ensured equitably and that resources are being used in equitable ways. Were a town resident to have questions, concerns, or even ideas regarding improving public safety, it is unclear whom they should contact and what they should do.

In contrast, in a matter of weeks and with volunteer resources, the Community Engagement and Walk & Talk subcommittees ended up creating a website in order to communicate who we are and our objectives. This was done in order to improve communications with Town residents in support of interviews about the Walk & Talk program.

The job that the Task Force has begun is far from over. The community engagement and relation-ship building is only just beginning. The next iteration of this task force will require a website that compiles all of the work done over these past months as well as a clear mission. It will be an accessible tool to provide information and advocacy around community-driven public safety and centralize the community’s visioning work.

## **Community Engagement Not Community Policing**

Community policing is a law enforcement approach whose objectives are to reduce fear and concern about crime and improve satisfaction with police service by having police officers staying in close contact in the neighborhoods they serve (see “Community Policing” defined at the National Police Foundation). Implementing community policing strategies typically involves building community partnerships, engaging in proactive problem-solving, and implementing community policing organizational structures (see “What Is Community Policing” at the International Association of Chiefs of Police). BPD demonstrates a number of the attributes of community policing through its Walk & Talk program, its ongoing work in diversifying its police force, its establishment of a Community Services Division, and the number of partnerships that it implements in the Brookline community (e.g., Community Emergency Response Team, self-defense training, Youth Basketball League). These structures and efforts have won over many Brookline residents who voiced their satisfaction with the BPD in our September 2020 public hearing.

There are a number of concerns that accompany implementing community policing strategies, including the perception that racist ideas and bias inform choices in the placement of officers, increased feelings of surveillance by community members brought into closer and more regular contact with police officers, and a general transformation of social problems and social issues

into police issues. Community interviews begun by this subcommittee corroborate a number of these concerns (and suggest the need for wider interviewing), but an in-depth evaluation of BPD's community policing efforts was not the work of this subcommittee. Our charge is to help the Town expand its vision of public safety and to propose alternatives that could decenter policing from certain functions.

Our recommendation is to develop a community-driven model for safety and justice that centers the voices of the communities closest to the public safety issues to identify priorities and generate solutions. This work should “start with the opportunities and challenges present in each neighborhood and build out from there, engaging with traditional justice system institutions and players only if and when it is necessary to do so, and challenging them when they get in the way.” The essential stakeholders are the ones with extensive first-hand knowledge needed to understand the most pressing problems in Brookline. They have been largely excluded from the conversations (in Brookline and nationally) around implementing public safety while bearing the brunt of violence, over-policing, surveillance, and incarceration.

To begin this process, Brookline needs to commit to long-term relationships and trust-building through substantial community organizing that is adequately resourced through grants and funding programs from the Town . We recommend this work be placed in the hands of community organizers that are members of these underrepresented communities as well as organizers who work outside of the existing power structures in the Town and the police department. They will be charged with developing a structure to solicit input, guide decision making, and surface priorities and action steps. This work will need participation from people with an array of community interests as well as the support of a broad coalition of local advocacy groups.

The last and, perhaps, the most critical piece in this strategy is a commitment from the Town government to being responsive to the community's priorities, as surfaced through the work of organizers, through spending and policy change. This is the critical step that has tripped up these efforts throughout history nationally to change the way public safety is administered in this country. If this commitment isn't there from the beginning and the community can't trust that anything substantial would come from this labor, there is no reason for the community to participate. If the plan developed is dismissed or only the superficial aspects are implemented, then nothing changes. This plan requires bold leadership to commit to the visions put forth by the community. Without a commitment to deep institutional change from the top tiers of local government, progress is not possible.

\* Community-Driven Models for Safety and Justice - this piece is the origin of the above strategy.

### **Eliminating Unintended One-Way Relationships**

As a subcommittee, we are not characterizing BPD's community engagement work as attempts to create one-way relationships in the Brookline community.

Instead, we are asking BPD to consider that a number of the relationships that it enters into *either are or run the risk of being perceived as one-way* based on the way that the relationships are structured or based on the limited information that is readily available about the nature of the relationship. The perceptions of relationships as one-way relationships can lead to them being perceived as marketing and messaging opportunities that only serve BPD's community engagement agenda.

For example, the BPD's use of photos and videos of their interactions with communities of color on the BPD website without members of those communities knowing how that material would be used is exploitative. Using those materials in this way might support the BPD's community presence or social media objectives but doing so doesn't return anything of comparable value to those community members.

As a second example, the BPD's AWARE educational initiative is described on the BPD website as "a collaborative effort by law enforcement officers, educators, students, parents, and the community." Anecdotal evidence suggests that few parents, educators or students have an accurate understanding of the BPD goal of community building the AWARE program is supposed to represent. There are no additional AWARE materials available on the BPD website such as the officer visit schedule, the participating officers, or the curriculum. While there is contact information available, the burden is placed on the community to learn the details of the program rather than BPD providing the information proactively. As a result calling this process a collaborative effort with parents is inaccurate.

In a third example, also about the AWARE program in the elementary schools typically provides three opportunities for BPD officers to be present in classrooms across the district. While the goal of the AWARE program is ostensibly relationship-building, there is no clear evidence that this type of relationship building was sought by and is considered valuable to parents and families. Further, parents whose children enter the Brookline elementary schools in grades 6-8 would likely find out about AWARE only through a letter announcing its implementation. We regard this as another instance of the BPD ensuring that its own community presence objectives can be met and checked off without ensuring that something of comparable value is returned to the community.

### **Going Small - Trust-Building Community Conversations**

Our recommendation that the town move forward with small group trust-building conversations was framed by several acute challenges in our subcommittee's work. As a subcommittee, we struggled with the challenges of attempting to do community engagement work with the Brookline community during a global pandemic, when large or small group gatherings were deemed unsafe. We struggled with the magnitude of a charge as vast as crafting an alternate vision of community public safety in just a few months' time. We struggled with the challenges the pandemic forced on a number of us in our having to work, parent, and educate our children all in the same physical space. And we struggled with the reality that despite our sincere intent

to get input from communities of color in Brookline, a climate of fear of retribution and “who is really listening anyway?” persists.

The recommendation to “go small” with trust-building conversations also stemmed from a recurring pattern observed across the work of a number of subcommittees and also the larger Task Force when hearings or discussions were held with content experts or community members whose opinions subcommittees needed as input. On a number of occasions, those supporting the institutions and practices of policing and public safety *as they currently exist* (in one case solicited by an explicit request by BPD officers) sought to use the dialogues for particularly demonstrative displays of support for the BPD. Public dialogue processes don’t preclude supporters of a current policy or governance approach from rallying to their cause; however, continuing to rely on public hearings as the primary approach for soliciting input appears to be the strategy least likely to build the trust needed to overcome perceptions of the Town as harboring bias (see, for example “Does Brookline Have A Problem with Black People”, Boston Magazine, October 2016; “Progressive Brookline Can’t Walk Away from an Ugly Racist Battle. Or Won’t, Boston Globe, October 2019).

As a subcommittee, we began the “go small” conversations relatively late into our work. However, our hope was that we would be able to provide insight into the types of information that the Town has the potential to obtain by continuing these conversations. Some emerging themes from the conversation are:

- Community members would like to see the Town break out of the traditional “cops and robbers” framing as it relates to thinking about public safety for Town residents and visitors to the Town
- Despite the existence of a complaints process that can be used, the climate of fear and intimidation continues to serve as a significant barrier to people providing input on choices the town makes in providing for the public’s safety
- The Town doesn’t regard options such as reducing or eliminating food security as among the choices it can make for improving public safety
- The Town is leaving a lot on the table because there is no perceived authentic effort to solicit the perspectives of Brookline students in how the Town makes choices about public safety
- People who are “paying attention to what is happening” feel unclear on what the opportunities exist to provide input on the town’s choices for public safety
- It is not evident that the town has a clearly articulated planning process for public safety
- There is not enough direct connection between people who directly experience the outcomes of the town’s choices for public safety (e.g., from receiving tickets to the presence of police in their community) and ways to participate in the oversight of policing and public safety.

There are a number of existing structures that the Town can use to continue these conversations, including its Commission for Diversity, Inclusion & Community Relations (CDICR, which has a group focused on patterns of discrimination), a newly-hired community

engagement organizer, its ongoing work with the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) and access to diversity and inclusion consultants. Based on the conversations held thus far, there is clear need to address the climate of fear and intimidation that exists in the Town. No authentic or legitimate public policy can be crafted if done so when fear is present. Any work to reimagine policing will require that the Town more thoroughly understand the causes of the climate of fear and work to eliminate them.

# Departmental Analysis Subcommittee Report

## I. Preliminary Matters

### A. Mission

(Approved by the full Task Force per meeting minutes dated September 25, 2020)  
This subcommittee will engage in a high-level review of the structure and functions of the Police Department. It will examine whether the current structure is optimal and whether all of the departmental functions are served well using law enforcement officers, including the impact on BIPOC populations. The subcommittee will also examine whether a different structure would improve public safety, and whether there are functions that can be better served with a different set of responders. It will also consider whether such restructuring better serves BIPOC populations and racial equity.

### B. Members

Eitan Hersh, Subcommittee Chair  
Raul Fernandez, Task Force Chair  
Mike Sandman  
Chi Chi Wu

### C. Initial Questions

In the first meetings, Subcommittee members discussed making recommendations on both process and substance

#### 1. Process Questions

How do we ensure that there is a constant effort to raise, analyze and rethink problematic issues and potential reforms? What structures are in place for constant re-evaluation and stakeholder input. For example, the Brookline Public School system receives a great deal of parental input from various bodies (Parent Councils, PTOs). The school system is also governed by the elected School Committee.

As for governance, the civilian oversight body for the Police Department is supposed to be the Select Board, but it has limited time and bandwidth to engage in detailed and comprehensive oversight given that the Board must deal with so many issues Townwide. Should there be a Committee delegated by the Select Board to oversee the Police Department, such as reviewing policies and procedures and resolving civilian complaints against the police officers,

#### 2. Substantive Issue Questions

What functions of the police department do we want to analyze for possible restructuring?

These are aside from the functions that are already the focus of other Subcommittees, such as the Walk & Talk unit, the School Resource Officer, and dealing with Vulnerable Populations. Some potential functions include traffic enforcement, liquor and lodging functions, and responding to noise complaints. We ultimately ended up focusing on traffic enforcement.

## **D. Research Process**

### 1. General

Both Mike Sandman and Chi Chi Wu created spreadsheets analyzing other municipalities. These sheets are discussed in Appendix B and posted here and here.

### 2. Process Issues

Eitan Hersh interviewed former Chief Daniel O'Leary on current methods of innovation. The entire Subcommittee interviewed Interim Chief Morgan for his feedback on the concept of a civilian oversight committee that would be tasked by the Select Board with the function of handling citizen complaints and reviewing the Police Department's policies and procedures.

### 3. Traffic Enforcement

a. Chi Chi Wu conducted internet research on re-imagining traffic enforcement from other communities, discussed in Section II.B.3 below.

b. Raul Fernandez conducted interviews with:

-Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler of Cambridge, MA

-Rigel Robinson of Berkeley, CA

Raul also researched the policies and proposals in those two communities

[Notes in Appendix A]

c. Chi Chi Wu interviews Rahsaan Hall, ACLU of Massachusetts

[Notes in Appendix A]

d. Chi Chi Wu viewed a Cambridge City Council Public Safety Hearing on Reimagining Traffic Enforcement

[Notes in Appendix A]

e. Former Chief O'Leary gave a presentation on traffic enforcement to the full Task Force

Summary in Task Force minutes of December 4, 2020 [link to minutes when available]

Data tables provided by Chief O'Leary are in Appendix D.

f. Transportation Administrator Todd Kirrane gave a presentation on traffic patterns in Brookline to the full Task Force on December 11, 2020, discussed in Section II.B.2 below.

## II. Specific Issues and Recommendations

### A. Process Recommendations

#### 1. Blueprint for Ongoing Police Innovation

How does the Brookline Police Department innovate? Where does the department learn about new ideas for how to reimagine its work? In theory, there are three primary ways for the department to learn new practices: 1.) **Internally**, from the experience of officers in the field; 2.) **Externally**, from learning new methods from departments in other municipalities or countries or from outside experts in law enforcement; 3.) **From citizens**, through a formal or informal process by which Brookline residents can share feedback, criticism, and new ideas.

Currently, the department focuses primarily on the **external** method of learning, secondarily on the **internal** method, and hardly at all on the method of learning **from citizens**.

**External.** In an interview with former chief Daniel O’Leary, our subcommittee learned that members of the department regularly attend conferences and seminars where they have the opportunity to learn about new ideas. For instance, many officers in leadership roles in the department attend programs sponsored by the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF). Through a visit to Scotland with PERF, the department learned new de-escalation strategies. PERF also was instrumental in the department’s updated Use of Force policy. Leaders in the department have also attended conferences put on by the International Association of Chiefs of Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Specialists in the department attend seminars for specific training in areas such as mental health, school safety, and firearm safety.

**Internal.** The department’s leadership also adopts new policies through ideas that emerge from rank-and-file officers. This process is partly formal and partly informal. Formally, the department has several sub-committees that provide feedback. Chief O’Leary offered an example of a subcommittee suggesting how officers are compensated for participating in a field training program. Informally, there are sometimes policies that seem both problematic and fixable to rank-and-file officers. For instance, according to Chief O’Leary, patrol officers thought the department was towing too many cars unnecessarily. Through feedback to the department’s leadership, the department changed its policy around the circumstances that merit towing a car.

**Citizens.** As for citizen input, the department has provided occasional opportunities for staff to meet with citizens and learn from them. Examples include a public meeting with a Q&A hosted at Brookline Town Hall, occasional opportunities to talk with officers at a coffee shop, and a police presence at public events such as community fairs.



## 2. Reimagining Innovation and Oversight

The Task Force recommends reorienting the method by which the Town oversees the Police Department and provides input about current practices and new innovation. Citizen oversight must play a central role. Citizen input and oversight should occur both informally and formally.

The need for citizen oversight and input was highlighted by two incidents that occurred during the work of the Task Force: (1) an inappropriate and misleading lobbying message sent by one of the Walk & Talk officers to Brookline Housing Authority residents prior to an interview that the Walk & Talk subcommittee had scheduled with them; and (2) personal attacks by the Police Union against Task Force Chair Raul Fernandez and anonymous hate messages sent to him. The survey conducted by Tufts University and analyzed in the report “Public Attitudes about the Police Department in Brookline, Massachusetts” found that 77% of respondents supported having a civilian oversight board in Brookline.

**Informal Citizen Input .** The Brookline Police Department should participate in a minimum of six public meetings annually in which citizens can ask questions and offer suggestions. The six meetings should each focus on a different community or issue area in the community, such as: residents of public housing, racial/ethnic minorities, religious communities, mental health challenges, students, and others. However, all residents are welcome to attend and make statements at all meetings. The meetings must be advertised, publicly recorded, and attended by the Chief of Police. The meetings must be hosted and moderated by the permanent committee of police oversight (see below).

**Formal Citizen Oversight.** The Brookline Select Board should appoint a permanent committee of police oversight, consisting of five residents of Brookline.<sup>1</sup> The committee should include members drawn from communities that have historically been subjected to discrimination by police departments in the United States. The committee members should serve three-year renewable terms that are staggered. Committee meetings should also have the participation of Town Counsel and Human Resources as non-voting members. Some Task Force members and members of the public provided additional suggestions on the structure of the oversight committee, which should be considered in the further development of this proposal.

The committee would have the following duties:

- a). Oversight function. The committee would be delegated the authority by the Select Board to engage in the following functions:

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<sup>1</sup> The Chicago Civilian Office of Police Accountability was suggested as a model.

(i) investigate and be empowered to resolve any civilian complaints;<sup>2</sup>

(ii) approval of mutual aid agreements and Memoranda of Understanding;

(iii) approve certain equipment procurement, including military-type, crowd control, and surveillance equipment;

(iv) review and approval of Department anti-bias training.

(v) review and make recommendations regarding the Police Department's budget request; and

(vi) review and ratify major policy decisions of the Police Department. Note that the Police Department has a 700 page Policies & Procedures manual which is subject to review and approval by the Select Board; this review and approval could be delegated to an Oversight Committee.

b). Advocate to the Select Board. The committee will provide regular input and recommendations to the Select Board on police conduct and police reform.

c). Advocate to Town Meeting. The committee will provide annual reports to Town Meeting regarding citizen experiences with Brookline police and recommendations for changes.

d). Public advocacy. The committee should seek out other opportunities and methods to serve as public advocates for citizens in the domain of public safety.

e). Learning. The committee should engage in learning:

i.) Alongside the department. At their discretion and at the town's expense, the committee members should attend conferences that the police officers are attending (if civilians are permitted to attend) plus attend other conferences, at their discretion, at which outside experts are evaluating and sharing new methods of public safety.

ii.) From patrol officers. The committee should conduct regular interviews with rank-and-file officers about the officers' experiences and suggestions for how to improve service.

iii.) From citizens. The committee should host public forums where citizens can offer feedback to police (see above). The committee will

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<sup>2</sup> This may require a change in the Union contract or implicate civil service issues because it is currently the duty of the Police Department's Office of Professional Responsibility

take minutes at these events and follow up with the police department and select board when necessary.

In sum, citizen oversight should be a central component of accountability for the Brookline Police Department. The Police Department should continuously learn and innovate to improve public safety in Brookline.

### Changes to Internal Processes

The Brookline Police Department should conduct more data collection internally and communicate this data to the public. There should specifically be more data collection and transparency about evaluations and promotions in relation to performance and training.

### Other Policy Recommendations

The Brookline Police Department mission statement should explicitly include an affirmation of equal treatment of all human beings, regardless of race or ethnicity. Not only should this be front and center on public facing information, but the hyperlink to file a complaint should accompany it.

## **B. Substantive Recommendation: Reimagining Traffic Enforcement**

One proposal for reimagining public safety has been to move the function of traffic enforcement from police officers to unarmed civilians. This idea has significant merit; however, we do not know the possible negative/unintended consequences of this policy change. Furthermore, it would likely require a change in Massachusetts state law in order to implement it.

### 1. Introduction

Traffic stops are often not criminal in nature, yet they have the potential to become pretexts for racial bias, e.g., stopping a “suspicious” Black motorist on the basis of a nonfunctional tail light. Some of the most notorious and well-publicized examples of police misconduct toward Black Americans originated from traffic stops that quickly escalated, resulting in injury, death, and/or unwarranted incarceration.

Traffic enforcement is one of the most frequent, if not *the* most frequent point of contact between police and citizenry. As this article in the Atlantic noted:

Every year, 50 million Americans come into contact with the police at least once, according to a 2015 report from the Bureau of Justice Statistics. About half of them are pulled over in a car that they're driving (19 million), or in which they are a passenger (6 million). Another 8 million are involved in a car accident.

Derek Thompson, Unbundle the Police, The Atlantic, June 11, 2020

## 2. Analysis of Brookline Traffic Patterns and Traffic Enforcement

One concern is whether police officers disproportionately stop Black and Latinx motorists, so we undertook an analysis to determine whether that was true in Brookline. We compared the racial composition of motorists issued traffic citations by the Brookline Police Department according to its 2019 Year End Report and 2018 Year End Report with Brookline's overall population by race according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

	<b>White</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Latinx</b>	<b>Asian</b>
2019 traffic citations	58.1%	16.8%	11.2%	8.4%
2018 traffic citations	59%	18%	9%	8%
Brookline population	74.1%	3.2%	7.8%	15.9%

One possible explanation for disparity in the racial composition of motorists issued citations versus the demographics of the town is that large numbers of motorists on Brookline streets are not residents [86% of motorists stopped are not residents according to statistics provided by Chief O'Leary]. For example, Boylston Street (Route 9) normally carries about 40,000 vehicles a day during the work week, far in excess of the number of vehicles registered in the town. Thus, some analysis was devoted to calculating the "denominator" to calculate the population affected by these stops.

We asked the Transportation Division for pre-pandemic data on from where vehicles entering Brookline originate. On December 11, 2020, Brookline Transportation Administrator Todd Kirrane presented an analysis of traffic patterns based upon the following map.

**Town of Brookline,  
Massachusetts**  
Police Patrolling  
Sectors

**Legend**

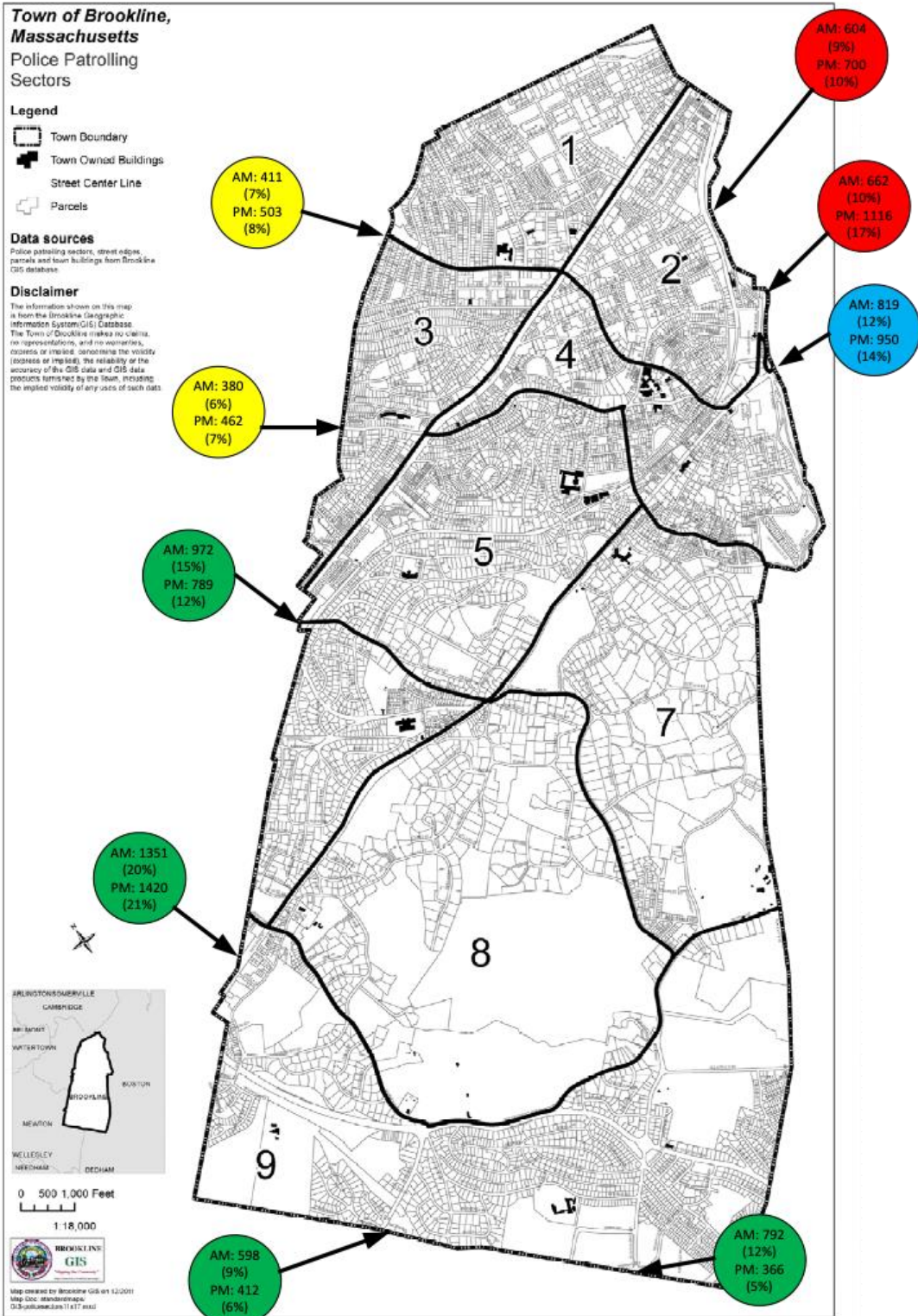
- Town Boundary
- Town Owned Buildings
- Street Center Line
- Parcels

**Data sources**

Police patrolling sectors, street edges, parcels and town buildings from Brookline GIS database.

**Disclaimer**

The information shown on this map is from the Brookline Geographic Information System (GIS) Database. The Town of Brookline makes no claims, no representations, and no warranties, express or implied, concerning the validity (accuracy or implied), the reliability or the accuracy of the GIS data and GIS data products furnished by the town, including the implied validity of any facts of such data.



The yellow circles indicate traffic coming from Allston and Brighton via Washington Street and Harvard Street, where the Black population is 6% and 4% and the Latinx population is 14% and 11%, as well as from Watertown (1.6% Black and 9.2% Latinx) and Cambridge (10.7% Black and 9.5% Latinx). The green circles indicate traffic coming from Newton and from West Roxbury, often originating in suburbs further south and west such as Natick, Framingham, Dedham and Walpole. The Black population in these Western and Southern suburbs ranges from 0.7% to 8.2% and the Latinx population ranges from 3.9% to 16.1%. Those six circles account for 69% of the vehicles entering Brookline during the morning rush-hour and 59% entering during the evening rush-hour.

The red circles represent traffic coming from the Longwood Medical Area (LMA). They account for another 19% of vehicles entering into town in the morning and 27% in the evening, with people employed in the LMA leaving work to return home. Only 12% of the morning traffic and 14% of the evening traffic enters Brookline from Huntington Avenue, which adjoins the Mission Hill neighborhood (15% Black and 20% Latinx).

A table with the racial compositions of the municipalities and Boston neighborhoods identified by Administrator Kirrane is on page 47.

Our analysis shows that Black motorists are disproportionately more likely to be stopped, not only based on Brookline population, but the population of municipalities and Boston neighborhoods from which traffic likely originates, with the exception of Mission Hill. Given the preponderance of vehicles entering from points of origin with largely White populations, it seems quite reasonable to conclude that the high percentage of stops of Black drivers in particular indicates either explicit or implicit bias on the part of patrol officers.

Furthermore, motorists of color - in particular Asian American motorists - are more likely to receive tickets rather than warnings when they are stopped, which is another sign of bias. This is based on data we received data from Chief O'Leary (see Appendix K) showing the percentage of traffic stops in 2028 and 2019 that resulted in a citation (e.g. a speeding ticket), a warning, or an arrest. The following table is a summary:

	2018				2019		
Race	Ticket	Warning	Other (Arrest; Court; Void)		Ticket	Warning	Other (Arrest; Court; Void)
White	9.9%	88.1%	2.0%		12.5%	86.7%	.8%
Black	8.9%	87.7%	3.4%		12.3%	84.9%	2.8%
[East/SE] Asian	15.6%	83.7%	1.6%		16.3%	82.3%	1.5%
[South]Asian	13.3%	86.3%	.04%		16.1%	82.4%	1.5%
Hispanic	12.8%	82.9%	4.3%		14.7%	81.7%	3.6%
Other/unknown	8.3%	77.8%	13.9%		11.4%	77.2%	11.4%

The last question was whether traffic stops by police officers resulted in significant numbers of arrests or referrals related to court cases. As one can see, the percentage of stops resulting in arrests or court cases is quite low. Furthermore, according to Chief O'Leary, many of these arrests were accompanied by major driving infractions such as DUIs. Thus, there are almost no stops where a simple stop (basic speeding, failure to signal) leads to getting a gun or a dangerous person off the streets, contrary to part of the narrative used to support police doing traffic enforcement.

	Stops	Arrests	Court Cases
<b>2018</b>	9,249	69 (0.8%)	90 (1%)
<b>2019</b>	13,761	85 (0.6%)	127 (0.9%)

### 3. Proposals on reimagining traffic enforcement from other municipalities and countries

A number of other municipalities have or are considering making traffic enforcement a civilian function. These include:

- The Cambridge City Council is considering a proposal that would move “routine traffic enforcement” duties from police officers to a group of unarmed city employees. Cambridge is considering shifting ‘routine traffic enforcement’ away from police. Here’s what to know, July 30, 2020.
- The Berkeley, California City Council voted in July 2020 to create a Department of Transportation and move traffic citations to that department. Berkeley cops to stop issuing traffic tickets under sweeping police changes, July 15, 2020.
- Montgomery County in Maryland has commissioned a study to figure out whether that county might be able to move certain traffic enforcement functions out of the police department and into other government agencies, including more use of automated camera enforcement. Should police be in charge of traffic enforcement? In a suburb beset by racial inequities, lawmakers aren’t sure, August 10, 2020.
- In New York City, traffic enforcement is conducted by civilians, but they are under the jurisdiction of the Police Department. There is a proposal to move these civilians into the NYC Department of Transportation. Campaign To Remove NYPD From Traffic Enforcement Gains Steam, June 25, 2020.
- International perspective  
  
We were only able to find one example of civilian traffic enforcement in admittedly brief research. In the United Kingdom, traffic enforcement on certain highways is conducted by civilian Highways England traffic officers. Can a Highways England motorway traffic officer give me a speeding ticket? Find out what these officers can and can’t do  
  
Ironically, the U.K. government is now considering giving police powers to these Highways England traffic officers. Civilian road patrols to get ‘police powers’, February 2017.
- Finally, this article has a good “Cliff Notes” summary about policing models in general in different countries. How Police Compare in Different Democracies, last updated Nov. 12, 2020.

### 4. Massachusetts law

A significant obstacle for any proposal to move traffic enforcement functions from police officers to civilians will be Massachusetts law. Chapter 90C, Section 2 of the Mass. General Laws essentially vests the power to issue traffic citations to police officers, in



that it specifies that the protocol involves the police chief issuing paper or electronic “citation books to each permanent full-time police officer of his department whose duties may or will include traffic duty or traffic law enforcement.”

This section likely means that civilians would not have the authority to issue traffic citations, or to stop motorists for that purposes. In fact, at one point, the Massachusetts Appeals Court held that even campus police officers from private colleges, who are authorized by state law to make criminal arrests, cannot stop vehicles to issue civil traffic citations. *Commonwealth v. Mullen*, 40 Mass. App. Ct. 404 (Mass. Ct. App. May 6, 1996).

Automatic enforcement by camera was mentioned in a couple of the articles cited above as a possible additional reform to reduce racial disparities in traffic enforcement. However, there is no Massachusetts law that permits the issuance of citations based on camera enforcement. This past year, a bill was introduced in the State Senate to allow enforcement by camera (S.2553). A bill to allow red light cameras is heading to the Mass. Senate floor. Here’s how the system would work, February 21, 2020. Update from Administrator Todd Kirrane: Senate Compromise Bill 2553 (red light cameras and school-bus cameras) died in the senate 19 to 18. The bill will likely be refiled in 2021 in the new legislative session.

## 5. Recommendations

Based on the above research, both policy-based and legal, one option would be to wait for the results of Berkeley’s consultant study and Cambridge’s efforts in this area. However, several Task Force members did not want to wait but to take immediate action.

Instead, the majority of Task Force members support recommending the introduction of a bill or Home Rule petition in the state legislature permitting certain limited traffic functions to be fulfilled by civilians.

Another option could be to support the refiled version of S.2553, the bill allowing automatic traffic enforcement by camera. Task Force members were split about that option.

# School Resource Officer Subcommittee Report

## I. Introduction

### A. Mission

This subcommittee will specifically examine the role of the School Resource Officers (SRO) within the Brookline Police Department (BPD) and Brookline Public Schools (PSB). It will analyze what function the SROs serve; if the function meets the criteria set forth in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) as signed as well as put forth by the Office of the Attorney General of Massachusetts; the balance the benefit SROs provide in relation to community policing, BPD and PSB students and families; methods and measures of accountability for SROs, BPD and PSB; and, the presence of SROs presenting lessons to PSB students.

### B. Members

Malcolm Cawthorne  
Kimberley Richardson  
Kristan Singleton  
Alexander Weinstein, subcommittee chair

### C. Acknowledgements

As a subcommittee we would like to acknowledge the following individuals and groups:

**BDP Officer Kaitlin Conneely**, BHS SRO who came to explain her role at BHS and field questions from the committee

**Suzanne Federspiel**, Chair of the School Committee learned about the SRO and explained the role of School Committee in placing an SRO at BHS and knowledge of the curriculum used in PSB Middle Schools

**Rahsaan Hall**, Lawyer for the Massachusetts ACLU helped explain the MA law around SROs, the Police Reform Bill in front of the MA Legislature and national research by ACLU on SROs

**BDP Sergeant Casey Hatchett**, a leader with the Community Police Division who came to help explain the role of SROs in BPD and PSB

**Katie Goldring**, Gr 6-7 Health & Wellness educator for helping us to develop a more in-depth understanding of the AWARE program and how it is implemented in the elementary schools.

**Dr. Maria Letasz Ed. D**, PSB Director of School Counseling and Clinical Services who gave explanations for the district perspective of BPD officers in PSB schools with a focus on the Middle Schools

**Anthony Meyer**, Head of School at Brookline High School who has helped explain the history of SROs at BHS and his role in bringing an SRO to BHS

**Lesley Ryan Miller**, Principal of the John Pierce Elementary School who helped explain the connection between BPD and her school

**Dr. Robert Weintraub Ed. D**, former BHS Headmaster who helped with the history of Brookline Police liaisons and collaboration with BHS Administration

**Pat Savage-Williams**, School Committee President of Evanston (IL) Township Public Schools who helped with understanding of how School Resource Officers are used in similar districts

**Carlyn Zaniboni Uyenoyama**, PSB Health and Wellness Coordinator K-12 who helped explain the role of BPD with the AWARE program with PSB Middle School students

**David Youkilis**, Interim Principal of the Michael Driscoll Elementary School who helped explain the connection between BPD and his school

## **D. Initial Questions**

What is the history of the SRO position in Brookline? What was the initial thinking behind instituting the position?

What are the statutory requirements for the SRO position?

To what extent is the SRO involved with school discipline, or with initiating criminal cases for students?

What are the costs and benefits for having an SRO? Who bears those costs, and who receives those benefits?

## **E. Research Process**

### 1. Historical and Institutional Research

Brookline Public Schools (PSB) and the Brookline Police Department (BPD) have had a long relationship as two institutional pillars of Brookline. For both, it is important to remember that these institutions have helped shape the Town for all of its attractiveness to those who reside here, attend school here and work here. Brookline High School (1843) was created 35 years before the Town saw a need for a police department (1878). There are many reasons for this; while I won't share the details, I do mention it because towns often adjust or create their institutions because of the things that are happening within the nation, the state and local communities.

While it is uncertain when BPD and PSB began their relationship with BPD officers making school visits to speak with PSB students, we know this has been happening for quite some time. The issue of an SRO is not about BPD having no role or connection to each of the schools within PSB. The historical issue is what brought the need for SROs into PSB schools and expanded the responsibilities for BPD as opposed to PSB.

In 1986, BHS began a program within its Social Studies Department known as the Legal Studies Program. This was a three year program where students learned about the legal process.

This brought then BPD officer, now Town of Brookline Associate Legal Counsel, Joslin Murphy to be a guest speaker for the senior class who also helped connect BHS students with internships that sometimes led students to further connect with BPD officers. This program continues but not in its original conception because the Education Reforms in the 1990s changed the scope and sequence of BHS Social Studies course offerings. Since 1996, Legal Studies became a senior elective exclusively and it still has guest speakers throughout the legal process as well as an internship that includes the High School Citizens Police Academy during the 3rd quarter. In 1991, Brookline began the DARE program in PSB Middle Schools which included 9th grade Health and Wellness classes at BHS. After decades in the national spotlight, The DARE program was deemed a failed program and both PSB and BPD ended the program. This program officially ended in the Spring of 2008 and there was the creation of the AWARE program. These programs changed the role of BPD in PSB but maintained a relationship between them.

Nationally, the 1980s saw the continuance of late 1960s terms from the Nixon Era like "Law and Order" combined with "The War on Drugs" and "School Resource Officer". However, it is still unclear why these terms would affect the Town of Brookline or BHS when drugs weren't rampant here during that time. Former Headmaster, Dr. Robert Weintraub Ed. D., felt that there was a negative perception of the Brookline Police when he arrived in 1989 as Assistant Headmaster. When he became Interim Headmaster in 1992, he worked to change that perception by meeting monthly with then BPD Chief Daniel O'Leary which led to having the weekly "Round Table" with BHS Administrators, Community and Juvenile Officers of both BPD and Brookline Municipal Court. The weekly Round Table continues today.

After the Columbine [CO] School Shooting (April 1999), a Brookline Police car and Officer was located in front of BHS before and after school to provide a greater sense of security for students, faculty, staff members and community members. As there have been more school shootings, there have been times where there was suggestions for, some would say pressure applied to, BHS Administrators to do things differently to maintain safety. In particular, the addition of more security by reducing the large number of BHS entry ways and exits. These suggestions or this applied pressure came to BHS Administrators from some BHS Administrators, School Committee (SC), PSB Central Office Administrators and BPD. Currently, none of those security steps have been enforced at BHS.

In 2013, the Massachusetts Legislature passed a Bill that required each municipality to have a SRO beginning January 1, 2014. The statute was amended by a criminal justice reform bill in 2018 and provided a new template for the MOU by the MA Attorney General's Office. The statute is M.G.L. c. 71, § 37P. Brookline entered into an MOU in October of 2019.

## 2. Interviews

11/23/20: Associate Town Legal Counsel, Michael Downey.

11/30/20: BPD Officer Kaitlin Conneely, SRO at Brookline High School; and BPD Sergeant Casey Hatchett.

01/11/21: Katie Goldring, health and wellness educator at the Runkle School; and Suzanne Federspiel, chair of the School Committee.

### 3. Survey

Data analysis from the 2020-2021 Task Force Departmental Analysis subcommittee survey of 25,000 Brookline residents<sup>3</sup> showed that a significant percentage of respondents did not know that there are police stationed in schools.

The report states:

“Of parents with children in schools, 14% report that law enforcement officers are stationed in the school, 47% say officers are not stationed at the school, and 39% are not sure. Of those reporting that officers are stationed in their child’s school, 79% report being comfortable with the officer’s presence, 13% report being uncomfortable, and 7% are neither comfortable nor uncomfortable. Of respondents with children, only 2% report the child involved in a disciplinary action involving the police.”

([https://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/23435/hersh\\_survey\\_report](https://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/23435/hersh_survey_report), page 8)

The Tufts survey does not address the SRO position in particular. It’s clear from the survey that the community wants police to be there to focus on crime, and doesn’t want police to take the lead on any other issue. They wanted to limit the scope of police duties, and to limit their power within those duties.

## **II. Findings: History and Current Status of the SRO Position**

Since the 2000s, a number of BPD Officers have served in essence as Community Officers or Liaisons because of their consistent work with BHS and the school community; Officers Deb Hatzieleftheriadis, Tim Stephenson, Prentice Pilot and Sean Williams are just a few. It is clear that there is a need for BPD Liaisons to PSB schools for specific instances around mandatory reporting and juvenile, criminal activity that can and will occur at school or with PSB students in Brookline but outside of school. Whether it is The Round Table at BHS or similarly appointed BDP to work with specific, elementary school administrations, the difference is the role of BPD in relation to schools and SROs.

It is unclear when negotiations to bring an SRO to PSB, particularly Brookline High School (BHS), began. The Interim Superintendent, Ben Lummis, who signed the MOU, does not seem to have been involved in the initial talks around an SRO being placed at BHS. The former Brookline Police Chief, Andrew Lipson, was at the helm for a little more than one year when he signed the MOU and he is no longer chief because the job was untenable. This is problematic. When leaders make decisions for arguably the two biggest institutions in our Town and aren’t present to evaluate them, monitor them or oversee them; that is problematic. Neither of these two leaders had much contact or communication with PSB or BHS outside of each other during a period of transition for both institutions.

When this committee’s work began, there was one SRO who was regularly stationed at the high school. Officer Kaitlin Conneely began her work at BHS in the fall of 2018 before the MOU was signed and near the beginning of both Lummis and Lipson’s terms. BHS went through a process to choose the current SRO. There were three candidates put forth by BPD, the Head of School and other BHS Administrators interviewed them, and the school chose Officer Conneely.

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<sup>3</sup> You can find the full report at

[https://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/23435/hersh\\_survey\\_report](https://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/23435/hersh_survey_report).

The lack of transparency around this issue had led people to think that the police department chose her. Instead, it was a collaborative process. The MOU, creating the standards for the SRO position, was signed in 2019. This occurred just after the state law about SROs was amended to require an MOU. We have not yet been able to uncover prior MOUs or discover how long MOUs have been used to define the expectations of the position.

In the Fall of 2018 the SRO at BHS moved into an office across from METCO's designated space at BHS which is also located near the Steps to Success (STS) and African American/Latinx Scholars Program (AALSP) spaces at BHS. There was no communication about this decision in advance of her office placement; no one communicated to the BHS staff; no one communicated to the BHS student body, and no one communicated to the BHS caretaker, guardian or parent community that an SRO was placed in the building nor where her office would be. When SRO Conneely became aware that she was being placed near to the METCO space, she promptly talked with the BHS METCO Coordinator on her own initiative. She was upfront and said that if this is a bad place for her, she would move. That productive conversation was never directed toward STS or AALSP. It became clear that no BHS or PSB Administrators spoke with METCO, STS, or AALSP staff, students or families about this strategic location. In mid-September 2020, shortly after mocking a "chokehold" while commenting during a meeting of the Task Force to Reform Policing, Select Board member Bernard Greene called the current, Interim PSB Superintendent, Dr. Jim Marini Ed.D., and asked for the SRO to be moved from her current office location. He made this call without discussing it with any other school personnel, the elected School Committee members or either Task Forces and without specifying where the SRO office should move.

In our committee meeting on November 23, 2020, Associate Town Legal Counsel, Michael Downey made this committee aware of the SRO Fact Sheet produced by BPD. In that document, there are three more BPD officers who are titled as SROs who work in each of the K-8 schools throughout the year. It is not clear when the fact sheet was written nor published on the BPD website; however, all BPD interaction as well as having Sergeant Hatchett and former Chief O'Leary in attendance at Task Force meetings, there was no mention of more than one SRO before encountering this fact sheet. On November 30, 2020, Sergeant Hatchett responded to a question about this new information commenting that these three officers who work with PSB Middle Schools and beyond were doing the same job as an SRO and their titles were changed. Unfortunately, the November 30 meeting was zoom bombed and there was not another meeting to follow up on that statement.

These findings led the committee to reach out to K-12 Health and Wellness Coordinator, Carlyn Uyenoyama, PSB elementary school personnel and leadership as well as School Committee Chair Suzanne Federspiel. It has become clear that there isn't a transparent nor consistent understanding of the SRO role at the eight elementary schools. As we spoke with Health and Wellness teacher Kate Goldring (Runkle), Interim Principal David Youkilis (Driscoll), Principal Lesley Ryan Miller (Pierce) and Dr. Maria Letasz Ed. D. (PSB Director for School Counseling and Clinical Services) that the presence and consistent connection as outlined in the SRO MOU isn't happening the same way at the eight elementary schools. In addition, the School Committee had no idea SROs are in the PSB buildings, let alone "teaching lessons" in a program for PSB Middle School students. Furthermore, this committee questions the lessons to be taught by SROs in the Middle Schools.

The committee reviewed letters that went to PSB 7th and 8th grade families written on BDP letterhead and sent electronically as well as postal mail in January of 2021. These letters notified parents that SROs will teach students about racial justice. With the information in those

letters as well as information gleaned from conversations with Middle School Leaders, District Leaders, SC Members, this committee has struggled to find answers as to why PSB students need or want SROs to teach about the following topics: Mental Wellness, Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships, Cyber Bullying, Safety During COVID, Substance Awareness, and Issues of Racial Justice and Community Policing. After addressing this issue at a meeting of the full Task Force on January 29, 2021, the committee received a forwarded email from former Chief O'Leary that was originally written by Lieutenant Jennifer Paster of the BPD Community Division in the afternoon of the same day. This email outlines a total of nine lessons over three years; two for 6th graders, three for 7th graders, and four with 8th graders. The curriculum does not mention the SROs teaching about racial justice. The email stated that SROs are present in the classroom for discussions of bullying and sexual assault at least in part because they had witnessed information being presented incorrectly under current law; it is not clear why an SRO would be more suited to do this task than a lawyer, or why checking the accuracy of the curriculum could not be done in advance rather than in real time. The email also places the driving force behind any curriculum changes as coming from Brookline K-12 Health and Wellness Coordinator Carlyn Uynemoyama. This is odd because of its timing. Malcolm Cawthorne had been speaking with Ms. Uynemoyama since the revelations of Middle School SROs and none of the changes made were mentioned by her. The letters went out to PSB Middle School families on BPD letterhead the week of January 17-23. Chief O'Leary was in our weekly Task Force meeting at 8am on January 29 and then left the meeting before 8:15am. Lieutenant Paster, Sergeant Hatchett or O'Leary could have sent the email to the two Task Forces earlier since the notes on the documents were (up)dated on January 26, 2021.

This history leads this committee to challenge the need and even the titling of SROs according to the MOU. What caused the BDP and PSB to place an SRO in BHS after 175 years of existence? The 2013 Bill did not mandate that the SRO be permanently located within a school building. This committee believes that the relationship with BPD Liaisons would and should have satisfied the school and the Town. With the context of the SRO MOU, it is hard to understand how Middle School SROs in Brookline can meet the expectations of the MOU. Moreover, this committee challenges the idea that BPD is more apt or qualified than trained teachers, counselors, trained peer counselors from BHS and the Town Victim Advocate to provide the nine lessons presented by armed, BPD officers who were not vetted by any PSB Middle School personnel. Normally, when courses are altered or modified, that needs to be presented to the School Committee ahead of implementation; this has never happened.

We recognize that officers working with students is consistent with BPD's community policing model and may also be consistent with aims to build relationships with students so that they feel comfortable reporting crime within the Brookline community. But we do not believe there is wide community endorsement of this work. In addition, we believe that despite the writing produced by BPD about parent partnerships, there is no evidence that there were any attempts of public or community outreach.

Finally, Governor Charlie Baker signed into law a Police Reform Bill in December 2020. The law no longer mandates that municipalities have an SRO. This bill made several other significant changes to the statute governing SROs. An SRO may only be assigned at the request of the school superintendent. The superintendent must, every year, make a public presentation to the School Committee on the SRO. A new commission will review the model MOU and create a new one for mandatory at-minimum implementation in the 2022 school year. [See Appendix A for a full summary of the changes in the law.] Since there is no longer a legal requirement that Brookline have SROs, we need to seriously consider whether we want them.

## II. Recommendations

### **Remove SROs from schools.**

After months of debate, our position is clear: SROs should not be in schools. SROs are not educators, they do not make the requisite investments to educate students well, and the Town's using them in service of educational purposes undermines the pillars of safety and community that are needed for students to thrive in our schools.

This position was established very nearly under cover of night. The MOU was signed by an interim superintendent and a short-term police chief. The School Committee was not consulted. Parents are not aware of its existence.<sup>4</sup> There was no public process around its implementation. There was no public process around the much-discussed move of the high school SRO across from the METCO office, or even notice given within the high school itself. There was no public process, nor the routine presentation to the School Committee, around the January 2021 changes to the middle school curriculum which will now have armed, uniformed officers teaching about racial justice. And, as of December 2020, Massachusetts law no longer requires an SRO. The law prior to that was never clear that an SRO had to be stationed in the BHS building at all. Police officers are not better qualified than trained teachers to teach middle school students about health and wellness. It is deeply important to reference the previous section of this report for a full and nuanced accounting of these findings; still, the evidence is overwhelming.

We have received some public comment which is thinking about this issue in terms of loss rather than gain. They are thinking of the loss of a person who they know, or with whom they have a relationship. We are thinking about gain. We can gain different ways to get what our kids need. We want to put more and better things in place.

We are not saying that we should ban police associations with schools, or police liaisons to schools. None of what we're suggesting precludes, for instance, the senior Legal Studies class being run the way it currently is, with police officers as occasional guest speakers.

**If Brookline is determined to keep the SRO position, it must be after engaging in an authentic reauthorization process prior to the start of the 2021-22 School Year.**

We must land the plane so we can see whether we even need it to take off.

If the town insists upon the SRO position, that insistence must be done through a rigorous public process. It cannot come solely from the Select Board--not after the profound lack of transparency surrounding the implementation of this position. And, crucially, the SRO position should not exist until such time as that process has concluded.

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<sup>4</sup> "Of parents with children in schools, 14% report that law enforcement officers are stationed in the school, 47% say officers are not stationed at the school, and 39% are not sure." Data from 2020-2021 Task Force Departmental Analysis subcommittee survey of 25,000 Brookline residents: [https://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/23435/hersh\\_survey\\_report](https://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/23435/hersh_survey_report).



The point here is not so much transparency--which should be a given, especially after the clouded history surrounding the creation of the position--as having a true public discussion about whether we need an SRO, why, and what form the position should take.

In legislative bodies, a reauthorization process is one that provides an opportunity to create, extend, or make changes to the terms under which a program operates.

While we as a subcommittee believe that the social and emotional needs of students can be met through other partnerships beyond those with the BPD, we acknowledge that there are students, families, and educators who do have positive regard for the presence of SROs and who do value their participation in the school community. We believe that an authentic reauthorization process -- one using the mechanisms of discussion, data collection, and identified accountability -- is the correct path for the Town because it will allow us to achieve a better balance between the recently updated regulations, the perspectives of those who support school-police partnerships, and those who have legitimate and important concerns about the partnerships. This reauthorization process is absolutely necessary if Brookline is to keep SROs, because parts of this position's initial implementation did not receive public scrutiny through discussion by the School Committee.

As a subcommittee, we also believe that the Town must also use a racial equity lens as part of its SRO reauthorization process. We define the use of a racial equity lens as "paying specific attention to race and ethnicity while analyzing problems, looking for solutions, and defining success". We do not believe that any reauthorization process should be reduced to a simple "numbers game" where the group that is able to bring the largest number of voices to the table has the final say on the design and implementation of a proposed program or initiative. This approach will continue to marginalize the perspectives of those in the demographic minority. Of critical importance is that the Town not view the decision of whether to continue SROs as a school-police partnership as an *isolated programmatic decision* and instead consider its school-police partnerships in the context of how some community members experience the *cumulative effects of policing*: this includes prioritized placement of police in their neighborhoods; the increased likelihood of encountering police while walking or driving in the town; as well as the presence of police officers in their school communities.

***Prior to SROs returning to any PSB school***, we recommend that the Town and School Committee commit to the following:

- A full audit and accounting of the places where it is currently using SROs or anticipates that it might use SROs in its curriculum (e.g., the Health & Wellness AWARE curriculum)
- Convening with parent support and advocacy groups (e.g., METCO, the Brookline Parents Organization, the Brookline Parent Education Network, the Brookline Asian American Family Network, Steps to Success) to discuss the anticipated design of its school-police partnerships and to obtain parent and family feedback on the design and anticipated benefits of those partnerships with groups representing and supporting communities experiencing disproportionate and adverse impact of policing (e.g., Brookline for Racial Justice and Equity, Unitarian Universalist First Parish in Brookline) to discuss their perspectives on and concerns about the anticipated design of proposed school-police partnerships
- Convenings both with student groups and student counselors to discuss their perspectives on and concerns about the anticipated design of the school-police partnership and their anticipated benefits
- Develop a method for evaluation of SROs and their effectiveness in schools that will be presented to the School Committee

- Increased participation within the faculty and staff communities at the assigned schools. This will mean attending Faculty meetings, attending Professional Development days and times as well as being involved in School equity trainings and planning
- The School Committee and Superintendent devoting at least one summer session to sharing the findings of its convenings on potential school-police partnerships with opportunities for written and public comment from the community

To complete an authentic reauthorization process, some of the steps above need to begin as soon as spring 2021. For example, it will be far easier and more credible for the town to make investments to obtain the input and perspectives of students and counselors during the academic year than it would be to attempt to obtain similar types of input during the summer.

In employing a racial equity lens to the reauthorization, it is particularly important that the Town structure conversations in ways that can overcome the climate of fear and concerns about retribution in response to feedback that exists in communities that experience adverse effects of policing. This may require assurances of confidentiality or establishing new partnerships that allow the Town to leverage expertise or relationships that it does not currently have.

As a subcommittee we recognize that the significant effort and time commitment required to complete the work above. Optimally, the Town would have an established history of doing this work prior to the implementation of any its school-police partnerships. We also recognize the role that inertia often plays in program implementation and we specially call upon the Town not to implement a “business as usual” approach whereby design of the school-police partnerships remain intact and implemented according to their historical patterns.

*Should the reauthorization outcome result in the Town’s continuing its school-police partnerships*, the Town of Brookline must more clearly adhere to the “model memorandum of understanding” (MOU) process for formalizing and framing the partnership. In addition to the terms set forth in the model MOU, we recommend that any MOU established between the School Committee and the chief of police must:

- Identify what other educator and community resources were considered to support the educational, social, and emotional needs of students and why the services of the town police department are a better choice to meet those student needs
- Identify what the budget implications are of continuing the partnership
- Identify the types of data that will be collected to evaluate the efficacy of the partnership
- Identify the types of data and what data collection methods (with appropriate permissions from affected students and their families) are needed to determine which student groups and which segments of the Brookline community are brought in contact with the BPD through the partnership
- Identify how the BPD plans to use a racial equity lens to analyze the program data, including what training and support will be provided in the BPD for data analysis
- Identify what the communication plan will be for sharing program outcomes with parents and the larger Brookline community

The bare minimum, the floor for this public process, is the new set of legal requirements.  
[See Appendix L.]

# **Walk & Talk Subcommittee Report**

## **I. Introduction**

### **A. Mission**

This subcommittee will specifically examine the role of the Brookline Police Department's (BPD) Walk & Talk (W&T) program. It will analyze what function the program serves, what net benefit it provides Brookline Housing Authority (BHA) residents, and the interactions of the officers with Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) residents and visitors.

### **B. Members**

Bonnie Bastien - Subcommittee Chair  
Kimberley Richardson  
Anne Weaver

### **C. Initial Questions**

- What are the BPD's objectives, as well as the BHA's objectives, for the W&T Program?
- Does the program accomplish its objectives?
- What are the BHA community's experiences of, and perspectives on, the W&T program?
- Why does the W&T program focus on "relationship-building with youths" at BHA and not in the other communities of Brookline?
- Is the program necessary? If not, do the benefits outweigh the costs?
- What specific services do W&T officers provide?
- Is it possible for another service to better serve the needs in this community?

## II. Walk & Talk Program History

As stated on the W&T page on the BPD website, “The officers assigned to the Walk & Talk unit, within the Community Service Division, are the main liaisons between Brookline Housing Authority (BHA) Administrators, personnel, and residents, and the police department. The goals of the Walk & Talk program are to make the officers approachable to the residents and vice versa, help them become familiar with the dynamics of housing life and to identify any residents in need of assistance. Through a combination of foot patrol, bike patrol, motorized patrol and attendance at community meetings/events these officers are highly visible to the residents.”.

In 1992, the W&T program was started by then Lieutenant Daniel O’Leary, Detective Mark Morgan, Chief Simard, and Brian Cloonan (Exec. Dir. of the BHA at the time). It was the beginning of a shift toward a new community policing strategy in Brookline. Community policing is a law enforcement approach whose objectives are to reduce fear and concern about crime and improve satisfaction with police service by having police officers staying in close contact in the neighborhoods they serve (see “Community Policing” defined by the National Police Foundation).

It has been stated in our Task Force conversations by now former Chief Daniel O’Leary that the W&T program was initiated in order to create positive relationships between police officers, residents, and youths so that not all interactions with officers are “bad”. He described this work as “building bridges”. The BPD website goes on to explain that through making the officers highly visible to the residents of the BHA, residents will become more trusting and willing to speak with the officers in order to alert them to potentially developing problems, report crimes, and to inform officers about happenings within the properties.

In our research to understand the objectives of the W&T program we found that in the almost 30 years of the program’s existence there has never been a contract or MOU written between the BHA and the BPD stating agreed upon objectives. The BPD’s objectives are described on their website (noted previously). There is no mention of the W&T program anywhere on the BHA website as a service provided or resource available to the residents. The only mention is in a post documenting a summer event. The officers are mentioned as attendants. There are no stated objectives for the program on the BHA’s end. In our interview with Mathew Baronas [see Appendix B] he stated that before the program was started the BPD noticed that there were BHA residents that were repeatedly getting put into the criminal justice system. The BPD offered a way to help diffuse and divert situations to help residents avoid the criminal justice system. He called the W&T officers “a part of the social service fabric” and states that their goals are the BHA’s goals which are “to help residents overcome their disadvantages to be able to thrive.” It has also been found that there has never been a formal assessment of the impact of the W&T program from either the BHA or BPD or from the perspective of the BHA residents receiving the service.

The subcommittee found that there has been an annual payment to the BPD of \$15,000 that comes from the BHA’s operating budget in return for the W&T program since the early days of

the program. There is no documentation of an agreement or what that payment is used for, though it has been stated in Task Force conversations with BHA administrators that that money began as a payment to the BPD to help supplement the officers' overtime. It is unclear what it is used for most recently.

### **III. Research Process**

#### **A. Literature Review**

The subcommittee reviewed peer-reviewed academic articles and websites related to community policing and community-based supports and services. The focus of the literature review was to gain an understanding of the historical impacts of community policing, as well as research and advocacy on community-based police programs and the impact, if any, on people living in affordable or public housing.

We used this research to shape our interviews and our recommendation priorities.

See Appendix M for more details.

#### **B. Interviews**

##### **Administrative Interviews**

1. **December 16, 2020.** Interview with W&T officers Pilgrim, Stephenson, and Lawlor. The interview focused on the W&T officers' day-to-day experiences and activities in the program, their relationships with BHA residents, and the purpose and goals of the program.
2. **January 19, 2021.** Interview with Matthew Baronas, Director of Property Management for the BHA. The interview focused on the history of the W&T program, overview of present-day W&T program, resident perspectives on the W&T program, and annual payment of \$15,000 given to BPD for W&T program.
3. **December 16, 2020.** Telephone conversation by Bonnie Bastien with Michael Alperin. The interview focused on the history of the W&T program, annual payment of \$15,000 given to BPD for W&T program; surveillance cameras, and BHA safety issues.

## **BHA Resident Interviews**

1. **Jan. 24, 2021. BHA Resident 1** - Notes from a phone conversation on W&T program in BHA
2. **Jan. 24, 2021. BHA Resident 2** - Notes from a phone conversation on BHA and policing
3. **February 1, 2021. BHA Resident 3**- Notes from a phone conversation on BHA and W&T program.

## **Brookline Resident Interview**

1. **Dec. 11, 2021 - Dec. 12, 2021. Brookline Resident 1**- Testimony taken from a social media post on W&T program in BHA
2. **Jan. 26, 2021: Brookline Resident 1**: Focus of interview was on policing in Brookline and public safety, particularly for BIPOC.

See Appendix N for full interviews.

## **C. Task Force Community Survey Responses**

Data analysis from the 2020-2021 Task Force to Reimagine Police Departmental Analysis subcommittee survey of 25,000 Brookline residents<sup>5</sup> found that Latinx and Black residents of Brookline were 8-9 percentage points more likely to have had a negative experience with the BPD than white or Asian residents, and less likely to report having had a positive experience (p. 5).

On the survey question on whether the BPD helped to feel safe in the community, 4% of Black respondents felt unsafe, 7% of Asian respondents felt unsafe, and 16% of Latinx respondents reported feeling somewhat or mostly unsafe (p. 6).

In addition, survey data showed a marked difference on respondents' perceptions of racial discrimination by Brookline police. While barely any white respondents (0.5%) felt they had been discriminated against by BPD officers, members of other racial groups and ethnicities reported greater perceptions of discrimination. Five percent of respondents who identified as Asian reported feeling discriminated against by local police, while 12% of Latinx respondents reported discrimination, and, significantly, 24% of Black respondents reported feeling discriminated against by BPD officers (p. 7).

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<sup>5</sup>See [https://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/23435/hersh\\_survey\\_report](https://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/23435/hersh_survey_report) for full survey data and analysis.

Finally, a significant percentage of survey respondents preferred community crisis workers to respond to non-violent crisis situations instead of police responders, except in domestic violence cases. The report stated:

“In responding to someone experiencing a mental health crisis or is suicidal, 4% think the police should respond, **83%** think social service workers should respond and 12% think both should respond. In dealing with a homeless person, 5% think the police should respond, **88%** think a social service worker should respond, and 8% think both should respond. In dealing with a dispute among neighbors or a disorderly minor, 23% think police should respond, **64%** think a social service worker should respond, and 13% think both should respond. In dealing with a case of domestic violence or abuse, 42% think the police should respond, 26% think social service workers should respond, and 31% think both should respond. In most of these scenarios, particularly those that are noncriminal, the public overwhelmingly favors social service workers responding rather than police.”

(p. 11, boldface added)

#### **D. Police Reform Committee Survey of Walk and Talk Program**

The Select Board’s Committee on Police Reform (a different committee than our Task Force) developed and mailed out a survey to residents of BHA properties asking for their experiences and opinions of the W&T program. The survey data was analyzed by a Town of Brookline staff member and relevant data to this subcommittee’s charge is presented here.

Seventy responses from BHA residents were received by the Committee, a response rate of approximately 9%. Of those responses, six informants (or 9%) identified as Black, six informants (or 9%) identified as Latinx, 14 informants (or 20%) identified as Asian, and 32 (or 46%) identified as white. These percentages of respondents’ racial/ethnic backgrounds differ from the racial/ethnic representation in the BHA community where 56% of residents identify as white, 25% identify as Black, 15% identify as Latinx, and 14% identify as Asian. The difference between those who responded to the survey versus those who reside in BHA is particularly noticeable for Black and Latinx residents, whose voices were not adequately represented in the survey results.

Statistical differences between respondents and BHA residents were also noted in the ages of the respondents: 39 of whom identified as age 65 or older; 12 who identified as ages 51 to 64; and 8 who identified as ages 36-50. In other words, 73% of the survey respondents identified as age 51 or older. This skew toward older survey respondents is notable in that young BHA residents’ experiences and opinions about the program – identified by W&T officers and BHA staff as a primary focus of the W&T program [see interviews in Appendix N] – were not represented by survey respondents.

Only 36 (or 51%) out of the 70 respondents reported that they were familiar with the W&T officers. Nineteen of the 36 who were familiar with the officers were in the 65+ age group and 10 respondents who were familiar with the program were in the 51-64 age group. It was unclear from the wording of the question if the respondents who reported “no familiarity” of the W&T officers were familiar with the W&T program or not.

In conclusion, this survey of BHA residents about the W&T program appears to be missing important data from BHA residents directly affected by the program. Of the 4 respondents who were in the age range of 18-35, 2 identified as white, 1 as Jewish, and 1 as Latinx. Broad sampling of young Black, Latinx, and Asian BHA residents is essential in evaluating this program and this demographic was notably absent from this data.

Why these young voices were absent is unclear — perhaps due to older family members filling out the survey instead of younger members; perhaps because younger members did not want to provide responses to the survey; or perhaps due to other explanations. Yet without the voices of young residents’ direct participation, it is impossible to reach any meaningful conclusions about the usefulness of the W&T program from this survey.

See Appendix C for a copy of the survey and the Preliminary Report Survey Analysis

#### **IV. Findings:**

In the beginning it was difficult to find BHA residents willing to speak with us or attend public meetings. This is in part because it took time for the subcommittee to find the right approach, but also because many fear retribution from the BPD or the BHA for speaking out. They expressed fear of losing their tenancy for speaking to us about the police. Our solution was to reach out to individual residents to have anonymous 1:1 conversations and transcribe the information without any identifying details. We were then able to get testimony from past and present BHA residents, as well as non-BHA Black residents in other neighborhoods of Brookline. This extreme hesitancy from BHA residents to speak freely about their perspectives on the police is itself evidence of the problematic nature of the W&T program. The community engagement work of this subcommittee is ongoing and will continue beyond the timeline of this Task Force.

#### **BHA Resident Responses**

The W&T program appears to be a great benefit to some BHA residents. Some have reported in the Task Force public hearing in September 2020 and in other public spaces that they have very close and trusting relationships with specific W&T officers. Many elderly residents report being quite pleased with the W&T program. There have been reported benefits in the youth basketball league as well as the residents’ ability to call on these officers at any time of day if they are experiencing an emergency.



Some residents report being grateful to the officers for their generosity during the holidays because they have been known to cook holiday meals for BHA residents.

The W&T program has also been reported to be a detriment to some Black BHA residents [See Appendix B]. Those residents report heightened anxiety and fear due to police presence at BHA properties. This anxiety has not been directed at particular officers or incidents, but rather to the presence of police officers in general. Residents report feeling surveilled in combination with concerns about the possibility of eviction from their BHA apartment because of what some have called “zero tolerance” policies at the BHA<sup>6</sup>.

When police are placed in a community with the goal of being highly visible in part with the expressed goal of inviting information from residents about possible problems in the community, it’s understandable that anxiety develops. Some residents have reported feeling policed in their own homes. Residents have reported worrying that their neighbor could possibly suspect something is wrong if, for example, there are a series of loud arguments heard coming from their apartment. It’s possible that the neighbor could mention that incident to the W&T officers triggering closer observation of that resident.

Due to the historical violence and oppression of Black, brown, and poor people by police, it has been reported that police officers can trigger anxiety in those communities and an impulse to avoid interaction with officers or act in a way that won’t draw attention [see Appendix A, literature review for citations]. This is not necessarily due to a particular officer’s actions, but rather to a person’s understanding of and experience with the institution of policing in the United States. Other white BHA residents and Brookline residents in non-BHA neighborhoods largely do not feel this way. However, many Black people and people of color living in non-BHA communities in Brookline do report feeling anxiety and fear when officers drive past them or when they need to come in contact with an officer on the street working a construction detail, for example. Again, this is not due to the actions and behaviors of officers necessarily, but of those residents’ experiences with and conceptions of the system and institution of policing.

In the survey conducted by the Committee on Police Reform, there were BHA residents that expressed satisfaction with the W&T program. There are also many that were not aware of the program. The benefits described by some BHA residents include the ability to directly call on an officer for help in an emergency - even in the middle of the night. The officers have on many occasions built meaningful relationships with some children and teenagers in BHA housing. But still others describe perceiving their children being targeted for questioning by police more than once about incidents unrelated to them. It is also true that some people have utilized the W&T program and have benefitted from having the officers there, but are still very uncomfortable with the arrangement. They needed help at some point and the only option available to them was a police officer. If a different social service or community service were available, that would have felt safer using that option [see interviews in Appendix N].

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<sup>6</sup>See BHA Handbook for resident policies [https://b6a38b27-654a-4453-9edd-9ed1158a8b10.filesusr.com/ugd/d1ed85\\_59d4e9c140124c89893d071611273094.pdf](https://b6a38b27-654a-4453-9edd-9ed1158a8b10.filesusr.com/ugd/d1ed85_59d4e9c140124c89893d071611273094.pdf)

It is clear that the W&T officers enjoy their role and relationships in the community. They are passionate about their work and believe that they are doing good work in the community. It is also clear that this program is very beneficial to the BPD. It helps them do their job better by allowing them to keep tabs on situations, follow up with people after incidents in the BHA, have opportunity to try to build trust with Black and brown residents that may have negative views of police officers, share resources with residents, and receive information about possible needs in the community or problem areas. It also helps them paint a different picture of themselves as police officers.

From the perspective of the BHA, Matt Baronas (Asst. Director of the BHA and Director of Management since 1983), who has been in his position since before the beginning of the program, has stated that he believes the program is beneficial and that officers are kind and have good relationships with the residents. When asked about the origins of the W&T program and why it made sense to have police officers do the work of “helping residents thrive”, as described earlier, or intervening in disputes between residents, mentoring children, and starting a basketball league instead of professional social service workers, he responded:

*“That’s a good question, a good observation, there is probably some truth to that. I can’t speak for the BPD but it was partly to build a more positive relationship between police officers and our residents. I think that was a major part of the thinking, to create positive relationships, trust, but I think the program has evolved considerably and I think, in my experience, I look at the W&T officers similarly to what occurs with our other social service partners. Let’s really put our heads together and what can we offer in these difficult situations, before they become problematic. I think some of it is our tenants are reaching out to the BPD repeatedly, complaining about a neighbor. Often we are also aware of those problems and the W&T officers are helpful.”* [See Appendix N for full interview]

When considering how to weigh the information we have received from residents about their experiences with the program, we cannot use a majority-wins measurement. The individuals that are expressing discomfort in their home with the W&T program and fear of speaking out about it may be in the minority, but their experiences are not less important than those that feel comfortable expressing their satisfaction with the program. While we estimate that their numbers are smaller than those in favor or of the program or indifferent, almost every person we spoke with that disliked the program was Black. We need to pay particular attention when the people who feel uncomfortable or unsafe are Black and brown residents whose population make up a small minority in Brookline. When those voices are drowned out, we uphold racist systems. The W&T program is a part of a public safety strategy; therefore, if some of the community feels unsafe because of the program itself, then the strategy is not providing public safety.

## V. Recommendations

While the W&T program has many benefits to some residents and utilizes some very well trained and kind officers, as evidenced above, police officers, whether they are doing a drug raid or coaching a basketball team, are still a part of the larger oppressive and violent history of the institution of policing in America and perceived by many Black and brown residents as such. That is not a truth that can be avoided.

Racial bias exists in every one of us, but proves particularly problematic in police officers because they are given the power to detain people, to stop and question them, to fine them, to lay hands on their bodies, and to arrest them which can lead to traumatic experiences for them and their loved ones, financial debt, and incarceration. Police officers providing social services is a conflict of interest and creates a barrier to those resources for some residents.

The BPD has on many occasions proven to not have the ability to hear criticism, particularly around race, or to hold themselves accountable via the current policy for investigation of citizen complaints. In our Task Force meetings and in the subcommittee meetings there has been an inability on the officers' part to express knowledge of the historical effects of policing on Black, brown, and poor communities and to apply it to themselves. This lack of an anti-racist lens to examine individual BPD officers, policies, or programs historically and in the present supports the anxieties expressed by our Black and brown neighbors. If the BPD can't see the problems and acknowledge them, they can't fix the problems.

In closing, our conclusions are not based on whether or not individual officers are liked or disliked. We are examining the system and the environment the W&T program creates. The central question to our work is, "Are police officers the best or even the most logical professionals suited to providing social services and building personal relationships in a multi-racial housing authority?". The subcommittee's answer is no.

So we offer the following recommendations:

- 1. In the short-term, develop an effective, comprehensive, and easily accessible website that provides access to currently available social services and other resources, and centralizes the advocacy and visioning work toward a new, community-driven public safety system.**

- We envision the development of an accessible, centralized website to house the newly developed resources in addition to the collection of the work the Task Force has done over these past months. It will provide information and advocacy on community-driven public safety and will centralize the community's visioning work. The website and its resources will be publicized widely.

- 2. Center the people most affected by public safety challenges in the process to develop an improved system of public safety. Continue the community engagement work that the subcommittee has begun which is outlined in the Community Engagement/Envisioning subcommittee report.**
  - Our work does not end here. This is only the beginning. Our conversations now need to shift from the subject of the W&T program to better understanding the challenges residents are experiencing, the opportunities already present, and the stakeholders that need to be centered in the conversation in order to envision new solutions and systems together.
- 3. We recommend that the Walk & Talk program either be disbanded and replaced with a new system or slowly phased out as other services and supports are developed alongside the W&T program.**
  - Using the community input gathered in the conversations previously described, we develop a new way forward to improve our system of public safety for all residents

# **Vulnerable People and People in Crisis Subcommittee Report**

## **I. Introduction**

### **A. Mission**

This sub-committee will examine the needs of Brookline residents who are vulnerable or in crises and to what extent those needs are being met or not met in Brookline. The committee will examine the work that other communities have done to meet the needs of people experiencing issues with mental health, substance abuse, and homelessness.<sup>7</sup> It will examine the interactions of the Brookline police with residents and visitors who have such needs, including both the positive and negative aspects, with a particular focus on interaction with BIPOC residents and visitors with such needs. The subcommittee will examine whether the needs of residents and visitors could be better met with a different set of responders of professionals.

### **B. Members**

Almas Dossa, subcommittee co-chair  
Anne Weaver, subcommittee co-chair  
Alexander Weinstein

### **C. Initial Questions**

What are the community-based services and support models for vulnerable people and people in crisis that currently exist in Brookline and what are the gaps that need to be addressed to strengthen community-based services and supports?

What crisis intervention services are currently being addressed by the BPD and how might community-based crisis intervention models enhance and /or replace the BPD crisis intervention services in order to better serve our community?

What crisis intervention services exist nationally and internationally and what crisis intervention models would best serve the Brookline community?

What community-based service models serving vulnerable people exist nationally and internationally and what, if any, of those models would best serve the Brookline community?

### **D. Research Process**

This subcommittee started meeting on October 1, 2020, and has met weekly since then. To date we have had 15 meetings. Several members of the public have joined us for the meetings and have, on occasion, engaged in the discussions, provided feedback, and asked questions.

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<sup>7</sup> The sub-committee voted to remove “domestic violence” from its scope on 11/19/20, and this change in scope was shared with the Reimagining Police Task Force, including the chair, on 11/20/20. We decided that the issue of domestic violence was significantly different from the other issues because there is significant public opinion that the other issues may not be best addressed through criminalization, while there is no such public opinion with regards to domestic violence.

## 1. Literature Review

The subcommittee reviewed dozens of national and international articles and websites, and attended two webinars, related to community supports and services. The focus of the literature review was existing programs which served people in crisis, including non-police crisis service programs, several housing program models, jail diversion models, and the Crisis Intervention Treatment BPD model. [See Appendix S for a full report on our research.]

We used this research to shape our interviews and our recommendation priorities.

## 2. Interviews

- A. 10/29/2020: Annabel Lane, social worker with BPD (funded through the State Dept. of Mental Health) and Lt. Jennifer Paster, BPD. The interview focused on the BPD Crisis Intervention Team and its use in the community.
- B. 11/5/2020: Ian Lang, executive director; Megan Smith, director of community services; and Heather Lykas, chief strategy officer; Brookline Center for Community Mental Health. The interview focused on services that the Center offers, successes and challenges, gaps in services for the Brookline community, and recommendations for services and alternatives to police interventions for crisis.
- C. 12/21/2020: 30-minute telephone call between Anne Weaver and Asantewaa Boykin R.N MICN, Director of MH First, a mental health crisis response team based in Sacramento CA. The discussion focused on the services and supports offered by MH First to members of the community who requested support in crisis situations.
- D. 01/07/2021: Tim Black, Director of Consulting, CAHOOTS, Eugene Oregon (Crisis Helping Out on the Streets). The interview focused on how the CAHOOTS model works, challenges and limitations of the CAHOOTS model, data on savings from the model, consulting process, gaps in services, and recommendations to enhance the model.

[See Appendix R for full interview notes.]

## 3. Task Force Community Survey responses

Data analysis from the 2020-2021 Task Force Departmental Analysis subcommittee survey of 25,000 Brookline residents<sup>8</sup> showed that a significant percentage of survey respondents preferred community crisis workers to respond to non-violent crisis situations instead of police responders, except in domestic violence cases.

The report states:

“In responding to someone experiencing a mental health crisis or is suicidal, 4% think the police should respond, **83%** think social service workers should respond and 12% think both should respond. In dealing with a homeless person, 5% think the police should respond, **88%** think a social service worker should respond, and 8% think both should respond. In dealing with a dispute among neighbors or a disorderly minor, 23% think police should respond, **64%** think a social service worker should respond, and 13% think both should respond. In dealing with a case of domestic violence or abuse, 42% think the police should respond, 26% think social service workers should respond, and 31% think both should respond. In most of these scenarios, particularly those that are noncriminal, the public overwhelmingly favors social service workers responding rather than police.”

([https://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/23435/hersh\\_survey\\_report](https://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/23435/hersh_survey_report) p. 11, boldface added)

## II. Recommendations

According to much of the research the sub-committee reviewed, including work by Alex Vitale,<sup>9</sup> El Sabawi & Carroll's 2020 article on crisis intervention model reform<sup>10</sup>, and a Brookings Institution report on first responders' roles in mental health crisis support,<sup>11</sup> law enforcement officers should not be the primary responders for persons in mental health and substance abuse crises. Forging partnerships with the mental health community as well as adequately following up on crises, for example, may be challenging for law enforcement agencies. Law enforcement involvement is also known to exacerbate mental health and substance use concerns. Additions to a person's criminal record make it harder or impossible to find housing. Law enforcement use of force against persons of color has been documented to have a negative impact on the overall mental health of the community. Research has also shown that individuals experiencing non-criminal mental health and substance abuse crises do not want a police response.

As stated above, this subcommittee was charged with researching crisis service models and community-based service models in order to determine if these models were adequately serving the needs of vulnerable people in Brookline. We concluded that the current services and supports offered to vulnerable people in Brookline do not adequately meet the needs of our community [see Appendix C for a list of the current community services and programs] and we offer the following recommendations on modifying and/or replacing the current programs.

The subcommittee received strong support for this report and our recommendations during a public hearing on February 4th, 2021. Twenty-six public attendees came to the hearing, and 12 gave public comments. All of the public comments were favorable to this subcommittee's recommendations. [See Appendix V.]

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<sup>8</sup> See [https://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/23435/hersh\\_survey\\_report](https://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/23435/hersh_survey_report) for full survey data and analysis.

<sup>9</sup> Vitale, A. (2017). *The end of policing*. Verso Books.

<sup>10</sup> El-Sabawi, T., & Carroll, J. J. (2020). A model for defunding: An evidence-based statute for behavioral health crisis response. *Elon University Law Legal Studies*, page 19. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3683432>

<sup>11</sup> Butler, S. M., & Sheriff, N. (2020). Innovative solutions to address the mental health crisis: Shifting away from police as first responders. Brookings Institution. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/innovative-solutions-to-address-the-mental-health-crisis-shifting-away-from-police-as-first-responders/>



## **A. Consult with CAHOOTS to Develop New Services**

### **1. The CIT Program Is Not Evidence-Based**

The Brookline Police Department is trained for mental health crisis calls through a program called CIT (“Crisis Intervention Team”). There is little to no evidence<sup>12</sup> that changes in officer skills or knowledge gained by CIT training predict desirable changes in call dispositions or use of force. Officer training, the backbone of the CIT model, generally includes education about mental illness, the causes, signs and symptoms, communications skills, and de-escalation skills. But again, there is currently no evidence that the CIT approach is effective at producing its desired outcomes.

In their 2020 law review of crisis model reform, El-Sabawi and Carroll wrote that “while there is ample evidence that CIT training is effective in increasing officer knowledge and confidence” when responding to a call involving a person with mental health issues, “whether [the officers] behaviors on the job subsequently change as a result of [CIT] training is largely unknown” (p. 19). Similarly, in an article reviewing police-citizen encounters in Illinois involving persons in a mental health crisis, Gatens (2018) stated that “[A] lack of empirical research exists on the effectiveness of the specific components of CIT in achieving its goals and objectives... CIT is not presently considered an evidence-based program ... by entities that compile evidence-based practices and programs” (p. 4).<sup>13</sup>

Finally, in a literature review of CIT practices and goal achievement, Rogers, McNiell, and Binder (2019) noted a number of unknown variables associated with determining CIT effectiveness, including location and insurance-specific variables, possible publication bias leading to a reduction of research showing a null effect or adverse cost increases associated with CIT, and comparisons with alternative models. Rogers et al. (2019) also observed that a person undergoing a mental health crisis is often also under the influence of recreational drugs or alcohol and that there is a well-established risk factor between persons who are intoxicated and increased police use of force.<sup>14</sup>

For these reasons, while CIT is an effective training program for police officers to learn how mental health issues can impact crisis interventions, there is no research at this time that would qualify it as an evidence-based model for police response with a person in mental health crisis, and there are reasons to be cautious on sending police officers as first responders.

Therefore, we believe that the current crisis model (BPD) needs to be replaced with a community-based crisis model. And that of the models we have researched, the CAHOOTS model, perhaps with some modifications, seems like the best fit for Brookline.

### **2. The CAHOOTS Model**

Under the CAHOOTS model, 911 dispatchers send mental health-related issues to a CAHOOTS crisis support team instead of police. That team acts as first responders in those instances. This model offers a viable alternative to police for responding to mental health crises. CAHOOTS was established in Eugene, OR in 1989, making it one of the oldest non-police response programs in the country.

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<sup>12</sup> The most recent research indicates that CIT has no effect on police behavior in the field. See: Taheri, S. A. (2016). Do crisis intervention teams reduce arrests and improve officer safety? A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 27(1), 76-96; and also Sei, C., Kim, B., & Kruis, N. E. (2021). Variation across police response models for handling encounters with people with mental illnesses: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 72, 1-14.

<sup>13</sup> Gatens, A. (2018). *Responding to individuals experiencing mental health crises: Police-involved programs*. Chicago, IL: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, page 4.

<sup>14</sup> Rogers, M. S., McNiel, D. E., & Binder, R. L. (2019). Effectiveness of police crisis intervention training programs. *J Amer Acad Psychiatry Law*, 47(4), pages 1-8.

We interviewed Tim Black, the director of CAHOOTS's consulting program. [See Appendix A for full notes from our interview]. CAHOOTS was established in 1989 in Eugene, Oregon, and its model has been replicated in several towns and cities across the country. It is a non-profit organization which operates via a third-party contract provided by law enforcement.

CAHOOTS crisis support consists of two-person teams consisting of a medic (a nurse, paramedic, or EMT) and a crisis worker who has substantial training and experience in the mental health field. The CAHOOTS teams deal with a wide range of mental health related crises, including conflict resolution, wellness checks related to overdose, welfare checks, substance abuse, suicide threats, and more. The teams use trauma-informed de-escalation and harm reduction techniques during their work with a person in crisis. When the mobile team responds to a call, they provide immediate stabilization by addressing emergent medical or psychological concerns. They then assess the person to determine how best to assist them through providing information, making referrals to services, advocacy to resolve a concern, and if need be, transportation to a facility for more intense services. Non-police crisis response services must be carefully designed to avoid perpetuating old problems; CAHOOTS successfully avoids that problem.<sup>15</sup>

According to CAHOOTS, out of the approximately 24,000 calls that they responded to in 2019, police presence was only required during 250—or approximately 1%—of those calls (El-Sabawi & Carroll, 2020, p. 26). CAHOOTS staff are not law enforcement officers and do not carry weapons. Their training and experience are the tools they use to ensure a non-violent resolution of crisis situations. They receive 70-80 service calls per day in the Eugene, Oregon metro area (including the neighboring city of Springfield, Oregon). They call for police backup less than once a day.

CAHOOTS saves money by diverting people from EMS, the hospital system, and the criminal legal system (the costs of nights in jail, tickets, court time, etc.). Tim Black estimated that for every \$1 spent on CAHOOTS, \$5 goes back into the community. CAHOOTS also supports and uplifts small community organizations.

### 3. Recommendation for Consultation with CAHOOTS

We recommend a formal consultation with them to help us build something that works for our community. They have an existing consultation system. They do not simply replicate the same program in different cities and towns; they custom-build a unique program for each community, responding to our resources and needs.<sup>16</sup>

Not only does CAHOOTS provide consulting and strategic guidance to communities who seek to implement a similar model, it also assists advocates with writing grant proposals to cover costs of initial planning and implementation fees. Per discussion with Tim Black, the consultation fee can vary between \$10,000 - \$25,000.

To be clear, we are not currently proposing any reduction of the BPD budget in order to cover this program, nor are we recommending that the BPD CIT program be reduced, or eliminated. Indeed, it is critical that our police department be trained in crisis intervention and de-escalation techniques for times when police interventions are warranted. We will determine financial options for the CAHOOTS program through the consulting process.

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<sup>15</sup> Article critiquing the NYC new crisis support program:

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<https://filtermag.org/nyc-new-non-police-mental-health-crisis-response-policing/amp/>

Article on how Black and brown people in crisis are not always best served by ER hospital care:  
<https://www.themarshallproject.org/2020/11/08/when-going-to-the-hospital-is-just-as-bad-as-jail?fbclid=IwAR3RNt1k2e5e87GXhIBdvWAE0wZw8iRoyqA2mwLZdTrZ2Janbdip7XaBoas>

<sup>16</sup> The town of Rochester, New York, is currently consulting with CAHOOTS.  
<https://www.rochestercitynewspaper.com/rochester/bill-would-put-rochester-in-cahoots-with-oregons-white-bird-clinic/Content?oid=12573043>; <https://www.wxnews.org/post/city-council-approves-consulting-contract-cahoots-operator>.

As with the development and staffing of new community-based services and supports listed below (Recommendation B), the hiring requirements for this new Brookline crisis intervention team should not necessarily be based on the prospective employee's educational background, but instead on their prior experiences and training in person-centered, trauma-informed, and harm reduction methods of care. Shared lived experience and personal connections with the community being served can sometimes be a more important job qualification than how many undergraduate and graduate degrees a job candidate may have. Thus it would be important to consider many factors when hiring for these positions in order to best serve and support the people in our community receiving these services.

## **B. Implement Additional Pre-Crisis Services**

As mentioned above, our interviews with the Brookline Police Dept CIT and the Brookline Center for Community Mental Health indicated the need for increased and community-based pre-crisis services in order to better serve vulnerable people in our community and reduce crisis calls.

There are several existing community-based resources on these issues available in Brookline. These include the Brookline Center for Community Mental Health, the Brookline Health Department resource page, Step by Step Supportive Services, Alternatives to calling Police/Boston Resources by Mutual Aid Medford and Somerville, The A.C.E. Collectives (Alternatives to Calling 911), and the Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance.

Although many of the above services exist in and around the Brookline area, none of them serve to prevent crises. [See Appendix C for more details and links to these services.] During our interview on November 11, 2020, the Brookline Center for Community Mental Health noted gaps in these services and outlined the need for several of the following services, which do not currently exist in Brookline. These services should address the underlying issues at play, including safe housing, quality education, access to health care, and other basic human rights.

### 1. Pre-Crisis Services

We need more social services to assist people in order to *prevent* crisis, and to support people who might be struggling with isolation, homelessness, and/or substance use.

Such services might include:

- Peer support specialists:
  - This includes a number of services designed to support people with mental illness or substance abuse issues. Peer support services are provided by trained specialists with “lived experience,” who use that experience to build relationships of trust with people and provide needed support.
- Case managers who connect people with support systems
  - Case managers can help people apply to welfare systems like food stamps, get them in touch with counseling and victim services, provide transportation to appointments, etc.
- Mobile treatment teams
  - This enables staff to reach out to people where they are and not require people to visit a physical location in order to receive help.
- Community drop-in center

- A place open during the day where people who are struggling with mental health issues, homelessness, or substance use, can go and receive peer support. This can help prevent isolation and help people build skills.
- Housing specialists / Supported housing
  - Supported housing is a comprehensive set of services including a housing subsidy and social support for being a successful tenant. It allows people with serious mental illness or substance abuse issues to live in their own apartments and homes within their community. Tenancy rights should not be conditioned on participation in treatment or compliance with any other criteria.
- Employment specialists
- Expansion of service capacity and language capacity at the Brookline Center

## 2. Follow-Up Services

We also need more social services to provide appropriate follow-up and support people after a crisis occurs.

Such services might include:

- Mobile crisis services (i.e., the CAHOOTS model)
  - Mobile crisis services are typically provided by teams of professionals trained to de-escalate individuals in crises.
- Community support bridging
  - A case manager, often a peer, dedicated to helping people find stable footing after a crisis.
- Same-day crisis therapy appointments that are available with a phone call
- Community-based embedded teams to provide services outside the building
- CAHOOTS suggested further possibilities:
  - Low-barrier shelter, and a variety of shelter options
  - Addiction services
  - Crisis respite

## **C. Publicize Existing Social Services**

Brookline already has several existing social services. [See Appendix C for a list of services.] It is difficult, however, to find out what services are available unless you already know what you're looking for. People who are in the midst of a crisis may have a particularly difficult time doing the research necessary to find help.

We should increase access to these services by publicizing them. There should be a single web page, easy to find on the town website, which lists these services and their contact information. The town should also invest in periodically advertising these services and providing public education so that people know to look for them.

## **D. Form a Social Services Department in Brookline That Would Implement Recommendations A, B, and C**

The lack of a social service agency in Brookline is a gaping hole in our government. The Town has a Health Department, but nothing which oversees social services. We have an opportunity to build a new department that would both develop and oversee the community-based services and supports in Brookline.

A Social Services Department would coordinate existing services, partner with agencies to enable communication across organizations, and not only get to the root of social issues, but also create and execute policies which support our community. The department would connect people who work with public housing and mental health; it would work with fire and building departments to make sure people are living in safe housing; it would work with the School Department and with the Brookline Housing Authority to create community-based services and supports that serve the needs of Brookline students and BHA residents.

This final recommendation could serve as the means to implement our previous three recommendations. A Social Services Department would partner with the Town health department, the Brookline Center for Community Mental Health, and the police to create the CAHOOTS program. In addition, it would implement new pre-crisis social services and educate the public about both new and existing social services.

# Brookline Forward

The Task Force proposes the creation of a new social service department in Brookline. It will address gaps in our social safety net that are currently being addressed through policing. The focus of this department would be to address the symptoms as well as the root causes of the inequities outlined below. The name Brookline Forward is a placeholder.

**Brookline Forward** will provide residents with the support they need to thrive. A new, innovative department of the Town of Brookline, Brookline Forward will partner with the Brookline Housing Authority, Public Schools of Brookline, Brookline Senior Center and local social service agencies to deliver timely, critical services, while conducting research, analyzing data, and implementing programs designed to counteract economic, health, and other inequities deeply rooted in racism, sexism, ageism, and other forms of oppression.

Brookline Forward will bring together existing offices under one umbrella including the:

- Office of Diversity, Inclusion & Community Relations;
- Council on Aging; and
- Office of Veterans' Services.

While establishing new offices including:

- Youth & Family Services;
- Community-Based Crisis Response;
- Immigrant & Refugee Services; and
- Economic Equity.

Brookline Forward will also provide staff support for the:

- Domestic Violence Roundtable;
- Commission for Women;
- Brookline Commission on Disability; and
- a new council on LGBTQIA+ Inclusion.

Brookline Forward will also partner with other Town departments as necessary to meet community needs. This includes working with Health & Human Services to develop a mental health incident response team, with the Building and Fire Departments to ensure residents are living in safe housing, and with the Police Department on diversion efforts for youth.

Brookline Forward will be funded by municipal dollars, including funds shifted from the Police Department, as well as local, state, and federal grants.

In addition to existing personnel, new staff at inception may include one administrative and three professional staff members as well as a new Commissioner to lead the department.



## **Appendices**

## Appendix A: Task Force Charge

The Task Force to Reimagine Policing in Brookline will explore and recommend new approaches to public safety and policing in Brookline. The Task Force will utilize a data-informed approach to interrogate our current model and provide a distinctly alternative approach to public safety.

The Task Force will:

- Seek to understand our current approach to public safety
  - Seek to understand how certain populations (including, but not limited to, Black, Indigenous, People of Color, Women & LGBTQ+ people) experience policing in Brookline
  - Explore alternative models of public safety in the US and abroad
  - Conceptualize new models of public safety that have yet to be imagined
  - Consider which police functions are better suited for other departments
  - Solicit public feedback and ideas through robust community engagement
  - Make recommendations for meaningful changes that can be enacted by the Select Board, Town Meeting, School Committee, or other relevant bodies
  - Make legislative recommendations to our state and congressional representatives
- Other tasks may be determined by Task Force members and community input.

### Membership

Voting Members: Voting members shall consist of Select Board Member Raul Fernandez (who will serve as Task Force Chair), Advisory Committee Chair Mike Sandman, and nine Brookline residents committed to reforming and reimagining Brookline's model of public safety, at least half of whom are people from communities disproportionately impacted by policing (including Black, Indigenous, People of Color, Women, and LGBTQ+ people).

Staff Members: The following Town staff or their designee shall serve as non-voting members: Chief of Police, Chief Diversity Officer, Human Resources Director, Town Administrator, and Town Counsel.

As Needed Staff and Outside Consultants: The Task Force shall consult with outside consultants or other Town staff or their designees, as needed, including the Fire Chief; Health and Human Services Director; Transportation Administrator; School Superintendent; Executive Director of the Community Mental Health Center; Brookline Housing Authority Director, representative of the Courts; the Norfolk County District Attorney; Police Department social worker, School Department social worker, teachers, academic researchers, or other appropriate persons.

Community Consultants: Task Force Chair Fernandez shall identify no more than ten residents to serve as non-voting community consultants. They shall be chosen from among those who submitted Task Force applications but were not selected, and shall possess an openness to reimagining Brookline's model of public safety. At least half will be people from communities disproportionately impacted by policing. The Task Force shall schedule public meetings to hear and discuss ideas, suggestions, and criticisms with these community consultants, in addition to forums that are open to all members of the public.

## **Approximate Timeline**

July 21, 2020

Approval of Task Force charge.

August 11, 2020

Appointment of Task Force members.

October 15, 2020

Interim recommendations including FY21 budget and policy adjustments and list of any actions taken by the Select Board pursuant to recommendations of the Task Force.

February 1, 2021

Final Task Force recommendations, including FY22 warrant articles and budget considerations for Annual Town Meeting.

The Task Force may also submit recommendations to the Select Board at any time.

## Appendix B: Survey Instrument

### Brookline Police Survey

Start of Block: consent

Q1 I am a researcher from Tufts University, in Massachusetts. I am conducting a research study to learn more about your experiences with and views towards the local police. This survey will ask you some questions for my research. It will take approximately 10 to 15 minutes of your time.

#### **You must be 18 years of age or older to participate in this survey.**

It's your decision, and there are no consequences to saying no. I don't anticipate any major risks to participation, but you may feel uncomfortable answering some questions. If at any time during the survey you want to stop participating, you are free to end your participation by closing the survey on your computer or device.

You will not receive any compensation for completing the survey. Your responses may be used in publications or presentations. I will not possess nor share identifiable information about you. Below you can find my contact information and the contact information of the research oversight board at Tufts, the Tufts SBER IRB, if you need to get in touch about this research at any point in the future.

For questions or concerns about the research study or procedures, or if you need to notify someone of a complaint, please contact the researcher:

Name: Brian Schaffner  
Tufts University Department or School: Tisch College  
Email: [brian.schaffner@tufts.edu](mailto:brian.schaffner@tufts.edu)  
Phone Number: 617.627.3467

If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, or if you would like to discuss the study with someone outside of the research team, contact the Tufts SBER IRB:

Tufts University  
Social Behavioral & Educational Research  
Institutional Review Board (SBER IRB)  
75 Kneeland Street, 6th Floor | Boston, MA 02111  
Telephone: 617-627-8804  
Email: [sber@tufts.edu](mailto:sber@tufts.edu)  
Website: <http://viceprovost.tufts.edu/sberirb/>

By clicking the box below, you agree to participate in this study.

☐ I agree to participate (1)

What is your year of birth?

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What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

☐ Less than high school degree (1)

☐ High school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent including GED) (2)

☐ Some college but no degree (3)

☐ Associate degree in college (2-year) (4)

☐ Bachelor's degree in college (4-year) (5)

☐ Master's degree (6)

☐ Doctoral degree (7)

☐ Professional degree (JD, MD) (8)

Which category or categories best describe you. Select all that apply.

☐ White (1)

☐ Hispanic, Latino/Latinx, or Spanish origin (2)

☐ Black or African American (3)

☐ Native American/American Indian/Indigenous or Alaska Native (4)

☐ Asian (5)

☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (6)

☐ Middle Eastern or North African (7)

☐ Another race, ethnicity, or origin: (8)

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What is your gender?

☐ Man (1)

☐ Woman (2)

☐ Other (3)

Are you the parent or guardian of any children under the age of 18?

☐ Yes (1)

☐ No (2)

Display This Question:

If parent = 1

Are you the parent or guardian of a child currently enrolled in school?

☐ Yes (1)

☐ No (2)

Are you registered to vote?

☐ Yes (1)

☐ No (2)

☐ Not sure (3)

How satisfied are you with the job the Brookline police department does?

☐ Very satisfied (1)

☐ Somewhat satisfied (2)

☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (3)

☐ Somewhat dissatisfied (4)

☐ Very dissatisfied (5)

Have you ever had any negative interactions with the Brookline Police?

☐ Yes (1)

☐ No (2)

Have you ever had any positive interactions with the Brookline Police?

☐ Yes (1)

☐ No (2)

Display This Question:

If Q10 = 1

Please describe the most negative experience you have had with the Brookline Police Department:

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Display This Question:

If Q11 = 1

Please describe the most positive experience you have had with the Brookline Police Department:

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How many times in the past 12 months have you interacted informally with a Brookline Police officer regarding something other than criminal activity?

▼ None (1) ... Ten or more times (11)



How many times in the past 12 months have you contacted the Brookline Police Department to report suspicious or criminal activity?

▼ None (1) ... Ten or more times (11)

Q19 Have you ever felt discriminated against by the Brookline police because of your...?

	Yes (1)	No (2)	Not sure (3)
Race or ethnicity (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gender (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sexuality (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Economic status (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Religion (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ability to speak English (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q20 Has language ever been a barrier to your communication with local law enforcement?

☐ Yes (1)

☐ No (2)

Display This Question:

If Q10 = 1

Or Q11 = 1

Have Brookline police officers ever...? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Struck you or restrained you with a baton (1)
- ☐ Handcuffed you (2)
- ☐ Tasered you (3)
- ☐ Pointed a gun at you (4)
- ☐ Restrained you on the back of a car (5)
- ☐ Pushed you to the ground (6)
- ☐ Used tear gas on you (7)
- ☐ Searched your car or residence without your permission (9)
- ☐ ☒ None of these (8)

Has a family member or friend of yours ever had a negative experience with the Brookline Police?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)
- ☐ Not sure (3)

Thinking now about your oldest child under the age of 18, how comfortable would you say they are with the police?

- ☐ Very comfortable (1)
- ☐ Somewhat comfortable (2)
- ☐ Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable (3)
- ☐ Somewhat uncomfortable (4)
- ☐ Very uncomfortable (5)

Are law enforcement officers stationed at your child's school?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)
- ☐ Not sure (3)

Display This Question:

If Q24 = 1

Does having law enforcement officers stationed at your child's school make you feel...?

- ☐ Very comfortable (1)
- ☐ Somewhat comfortable (2)
- ☐ Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable (3)

☐ Somewhat uncomfortable (4)

☐ Very uncomfortable (5)

Has your child ever been involved in a disciplinary action at school involving a police officer?

☐ Yes (1)

☐ No (2)

☐ Not sure (3)

Display This Question:

If Q25 = 1

Please describe this experience:

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Do the Brookline police make you feel...?

☐ Mostly safe (1)

☐ Somewhat safe (2)

☐ Somewhat unsafe (3)

☐ Mostly unsafe (4)

If you needed help, how comfortable would you feel calling the police?

- ☐ Very comfortable (1)
- ☐ Somewhat comfortable (2)
- ☐ Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable (3)
- ☐ Somewhat uncomfortable (4)
- ☐ Very uncomfortable (5)

If you had a negative experience with a Brookline police officer, would you know how to file a complaint against that officer?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

If you had a negative experience with a Brookline police officer, how comfortable would you feel filing a complaint against that officer?

- ☐ Very comfortable (1)
- ☐ Somewhat comfortable (2)
- ☐ Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable (3)
- ☐ Somewhat uncomfortable (4)
- ☐ Very uncomfortable (5)

How often would you say that you worry about being the victim of police brutality?

- ☐ Very often (1)
- ☐ Somewhat often (2)
- ☐ Not too often (3)
- ☐ Never (4)

Do you believe the Brookline Police equitably serve the interest of all people, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, citizenship status or class?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

How do you think the Brookline Police treat the following groups:

	Very fairly (1)	Somewhat fairly (2)	Somewhat unfairly (3)	Very unfairly (4)
White residents (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Black residents (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hispanic residents (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Asian residents (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How effective are the Brookline Police at...

	Extremely effective (1)	Somewhat effective (2)	Somewhat ineffective (3)	Very ineffective (4)	Not sure (5)
Ensuring public safety (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fighting crime (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Making residents feel safe (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Holding police officers accountable (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Developing relationships with members of the community (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Which of the following police tactics and weaponry do you believe Brookline police should be allowed to use to ensure public safety? (Check all that apply)

☐ Pepper spray (2)

- ☐ Physical strength (hand control) (3)
- ☐ Choke holds (4)
- ☐ Impact weapons (batons) (5)
- ☐ Tear gas (6)
- ☐ Tasers (7)
- ☐ Restraint devices (handcuffs or zip ties) (8)
- ☐ K-9 Dog bite-and-hold (9)
- ☐ Beanbag munitions (rubber bullets) (11)
- ☐ Firearms (12)
- ☐ ☒ None of these (13)

Listed below are reforms that have been proposed to reduce police interactions that result in the use of deadly force. How effective do you believe each of these would be at reducing or eliminating deadly interactions?

	Very effective (1)	Somewhat effective (2)	Somewhat ineffective (3)	Very ineffective (4)	Not sure (5)
Having police officers attend trainings on how to de-escalate conflicts (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having police officers wear body cameras to record	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



officer  
activities (2)

Educating  
police officers  
on the history  
of police  
departments  
(3)



Ending the  
Department of  
Defense  
program that  
sends surplus  
military  
weapons and  
equipment to  
police  
departments  
(4)



Banning the  
use of  
chokeholds  
(5)



Diversifying  
the police  
department  
(6)



Having police  
officers attend  
trainings on  
racial bias (7)



Reduce  
funding to the  
police  
department by  
at least 10%  
(8)



Abolish the  
police  
department  
(9)

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

In given situations, it is possible to have either police or social service workers (such as social workers, medics, or mental health professionals) respond. For each of the following situations, please indicate whether you think it would be better for the police or social service workers to respond?

	The police (1)	Social service workers (2)	Not sure (3)
Individuals who are intoxicated or have overdosed (1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Armed individuals (2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Individuals experiencing mental health crises or who are suicidal (3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Homeless individuals (4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neighbor disputes and disorderly kids or truants (5)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Robberies or instances of theft (6)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Domestic violence and abuse (7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Some communities have Civilian Review Boards which are made up of residents. These boards review the actions of police and hear complaints from residents about police behavior. Do you think Brookline should have a Civilian Review Board?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)
- ☐ Not sure (3)

If Brookline did create a Civilian Review Board, which of the following powers do you think that board should have? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ The power to hire police officers (1)
- ☐ The power to fire police officers (2)
- ☐ The power to set policies for policing (Ex: What should the use of force look like?) (3)
- ☐ The power to set priorities for policing (Ex: Should the homeless be criminalized or should officers help in connecting them to housing?) (4)
- ☐ The power to Investigate all police shootings (5)
- ☐ The power to investigate allegations of excessive force and abuse (6)
- ☐ The power to pass judgement on the disciplinary process against officers in violation of policies or law (7)
- ☐ The power to negotiate police contracts (8)
- ☒ None of these (9)

Brookline currently spends more than \$17 million on the police department, which is approximately 5.6% of the entire Brookline city budget. Do you think funding for the Brookline Police Department should be...?

- ☐ Greatly increased (1)
- ☐ Somewhat increased (2)
- ☐ Kept the same (3)
- ☐ Somewhat decreased (4)
- ☐ Greatly decreased (5)

Which of the following would you support in order to ensure public transparency into the operations of the Brookline Police Department? (Select all that apply).

- ☐ Making public the details of the department's internal process in addressing violations of conduct and crimes committed by officers (1)
- ☐ Making public a list of all complaints against Brookline police officers and any disciplinary actions taken in response to those complaints (2)
- ☐ Making public a list of all lethal and non-lethal weapons carried by each patrol unit (3)
- ☐ Including community members in the investigation process of police misconduct (4)
- ☐ ☒ None of these (5)

Finally, do you have anything else you would like to share with us regarding your views on policing?

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This survey is sponsored by the Brookline Select Board's Task Force to Reimagine Policing. If you have questions or concerns, you may email Selectboard member and Taskforce chair Raul Fernandez at [rfernandez@brooklinema.gov](mailto:rfernandez@brooklinema.gov) or subcommittee chair Eitan Hersh at [eitan.hersh@tufts.edu](mailto:eitan.hersh@tufts.edu)

## **Appendix C: Raw Survey Data**

Survey data is available at the following link here.

## Appendix D: Resources and Materials from the BPD

- [Brookline Police Department Website](#)
- [Brookline Police Department Commendations & Complaints Brochure](#)
- [Brookline Police Department 2016 Final Letter on Racial Diversity, Outreach, and Organizational Culture](#)
- [Brookline Police Department 2017 Police Complaint Procedures Review](#)
- [Brookline Police Department 2017 Year End Review](#)
- [Brookline Police Department 2018 Year End Racial Disparities Report](#)
- [Citizen Complaint Process Overview](#)
- [Citizen Complaint Online Form](#)
- [Racial Profiling Prevention and Diversity Training Overview](#)
- [Recommended Changes to the Police Complaint Policy](#)

## Appendix E: Draft Interview Protocol for Trust-Building Conversations

- Table setting questions, such as “What are your views on what public safety means for Brookline? For your family?”
- What kind of services do you think there should be to ensure public safety generally in Brookline? For your family?
- Do you see the way that you think about public safety reflected in the choices the Town is making?
- Do you see the way you think about public safety reflected in the public safety choices and solutions available to you?
- To what degree would you say you have a voice in creating or informing the Town’s current public safety strategies?
- Do the Town’s current public safety initiatives draw on information and expertise from community voices and community leaders that are important to you?
  - If no, who are those community voices and leaders? What insight and expertise do you think the Town is missing out on?
  - If yes, can you provide some examples of how their expertise and insight is informing the Town’s work in public safety?
- Do you perceive any barriers to participation in conversations about policing and public safety?
- Do you have recommendations for ways the Town can continue to collect data about policing and public safety?
- Are there Town-community collaborations for public safety (with or without police) that you are aware of?
  - If yes, do you believe that they are effective? Why or why not?
  - If no, are there collaborations that you think should be started?
  - If no, are there collaborations that *used to exist* that you think should be resumed?

- Thinking about the places where you think change needs to happen, what pieces would need to be in place for you to believe that the town was serious about making those changes?
- What else don't we know about how you experience policing and public safety that we should know?



## Appendix F: Interview recordings, statements, and transcriptions

### Going Small Conversation Notes & Highlights

#### *Conversation 1 - Black Femme Brookline Resident*

#### Why were you compelled to reach out to us about the survey?

##### **Watches Townwide page on FB**

- Expected Brookline to be a more understanding community about minority experiences. However, what is posted on the FB page doesn't always reflect that shared understanding/experience.
- Sees lots of great activism and meaningful work as well.
- Lots of people need to hear individual experiences in order to relate to it. You can read all the newspaper articles you want, but until someone shares their experiences and perspective - it's easy to block out.

##### **Personal stories: (all within the last year and a half)**

1. Brookline officer monitoring construction site. Crosswalk blocked off and an officer was standing where people would normally cross. Her anxiety was enough to motivate her to walk entirely around the block rather than do what most people did, which was jaywalk in front of the officer.
  - Fear and anxiety about interacting with the police officer
  - This was in contrast to her white partner who didn't hesitate with the officer
  - She has never had a good interaction with police
2. Older Black man was stopped in his car on the corner across from Trader Joe's in Brookline. He was being accused of stealing from a store.
  - She stopped to be present and watch as a bystander, even though she felt that as a Black person she may not be as helpful as a white person in this situation.
  - Quickly the officers called more and more officers to help with this man (the man in the car looked to be around 60, not doing anything "disrespectful" - didn't seem to be a threat in any way)
  - 6 officers standing around this man accusing him of theft
  - Quickly became harassment - "how could it be anything other than intimidation to surround this one man (a minority) with that many officers and question him"
  - There are protocols in place for this scenario that the officers did not do (ask a few questions and ask him to come voluntarily to the station).
  - Because they hadn't done any of those things, it became clear that they didn't have proof that this man committed a crime and were really just being intimidating and hoping to catch him in the act of something else.
3. May or June - heard car horns outside her apartment. Saw 4 police cars, several residents outside, an EMT truck, and a Black man and a Black woman (lots of blood on her face) in a car being questioned by police.

- Stood by again to act as a witness
  - Other people assumed the situation might be a domestic violence (DV) incident that caused an accident - woman covered in blood, man not bloody but very upset
  - She feared for the man, but thought DV was unlikely because police let the couple stand close to each other - police took statement, woman got in EMT truck
  - She stayed to remind the man that he can remain silent if he does get arrested
  - 5 police cars
  - Everyone left the man alone (EMT took woman) and he found that he was locked out of his car
  - Turns out man/woman got in accident and she hit her head (not dv)
  - Police left without assisting him - He was now locked out of car - no one waited to see if he was ok, offered no medical assistance, no one made sure he could drive or that his car was safe to drive.
  - Demonstrated why we need other services. Better trained people wouldn't have left him there after that traumatizing situation. Others services would have been beneficial.
  - Her takeaway
    - While this was not an egregious offense, if police are truly community servants, why didn't they offer to drive him home or stay around to make sure he drove off safely, etc.?
    - Shows how pointless some police services are.
- **Do you have a vision of what you think public safety should be? Do you see that reflected in the choices the Town is making?**
    - She thinks about "Circle Justice" a lot, which is an alternative to child services
      - It's a community- based group of people whose first interest is the community, not their bonus or quotas or the gov't (this can really depend on your community - can be challenging)
      - The person affected picks the people in the circle so its a safe space
      - People are brought together in this way from the community to act as moderator, emotional support person, etc.
      - This is what social workers are for - to assist people when other resources fail - provide council and
      - Also many social workers feel more similar to police than this vision
    - What's needed is a sort of bookkeeper of resources that can provide the emotional support needed before a person is connected to those resources.
    - There's a lot of mending - we need to tear down the system and start from scratch. It will never be functional until there is a lot of healing in the community.

### **Personal Story**

\*\* "I will never be able to have a good relationship with police officers because the relationship and the history is too deep already" \*\*

\*\* “Growing up, my peers and I were so used to going to the police station to introduce ourselves to the police officers in our communities so that they would know who we were so we wouldn’t need to interact with them spontaneously in situations. There was constantly this idea that you have to get to know them before they can decide who you are in a moment. I’ve lived in MA for 8 years and every community that I live in I go introduce myself.”

- I’d call my friend who is a firefighter before I called the police.
- COVID 9pm curfew - She works until 9pm daily and wasn’t getting enough exercise. She was afraid of walking on her own on the street after curfew and getting in trouble or accused of doing something criminal or inappropriate
- She strictly adheres to COVID restrictions more than others because if there were anyone who would get in trouble, it would be her more than others.
- “There’s so much Black and Brown people do in communities to make themselves feel safe and then they are constantly surrounded by stimulus that tells them that they are not safe no matter what they do”
- “Even if an officer was working in a positive way in partnership with the housing authority and providing social services, I would not be comfortable using that service. I don’t think I could not trust it. I would not sign-up or use those resources.”

- **Do you see the way you think about public safety reflected in the public safety choices and solutions available to you?**

- Yes and no - i disagree with what people are proposing relating to reforming the system rather than rethinking the system.
- In Brookline we are appropriately policed. Not like Forest Hills or Dorchester
- People here are more involved and community oriented
- We are appropriately policed
- Comes from the demographic of Brookline - only knows 1 other Black person here.
- Brookline is out of touch with what a typical experience with police is

- **To what degree would you say you have a voice in creating or informing the Town’s current public safety strategies?**

- I think there is a lot of opportunity - I feel like I could but I’m fearful of the reaction of the community
- Option is there and space is given for people that look like me to get involved, but it’s not set up in a way that makes it comfortable for me to speak up with an opinion.
- “I don’t put my BLM sign in my window because it feels too dangerous - because of things that are written and comments that are made (FB Townwide) I am not putting that on my window.”

\*\* “Irony that the public library is across the street from the police station - library should be a place of exploration and safety - If I were a Black teenager in Brookline, I would not be hanging outside by the library - feels like too much of an opportunity to get into trouble.” \*\*

- **Do the Town’s current public safety initiatives draw on information and expertise from community voices and community leaders that are important to you?**
  - **If no, who are those community voices and leaders? What insight and expertise do you think the Town is missing out on?**
    - The community I would like to hear from doesn’t live in Brookline. There are very few voices of color
- **Do you perceive any barriers to participation in conversations about policing and public safety?**
  - “Yes, there’s a danger in openly stating my opinion”
- **Do you have recommendations for ways the Town can continue to collect data about policing and public safety?**
  - Issues with our survey
    - Similar to why people don’t fill out the census
    - Packaging - she would of thrown it away
    - If she were an immigrant or more barriers I wouldn’t of filled it out - looks like the government - doesn’t look like it’s coming from people who want to support her
  - How to improve the survey
    - Be in the community setting up shop
    - Have people in housing getting their neighbors to fill it out
    - Get the survey in businesses by the door
    - Needs to feel safer to fill out.
- **Are there Town-community collaborations for public safety (with or without police) that you are aware of?**
  - no
  - **If no, are there collaborations that you think should be started?**
    - It all falls on the training - Collaboration should have a Black/Brown organization that does trainings for these services
      - Levels of trainings - mental health
      - Interactions with Black/brown people
      - How to approach people
  - **If no, are there collaborations that *used to exist* that you think should be resumed?**
    - n/a

- **Thinking about the places where you think change needs to happen, what pieces would need to be in place for you to believe that the town was serious about making those changes?**
  - Putting their money where their mouth is - not just for show
  - Need to see buy-in from people she respects - professors, professionals (mental health, community leaders outside of systems of oppression)
  - Police budget is astronomical for how little they need to do in Brookline
  - Some of that money put into community efforts
  
- **What else don't we know about how you experience policing and public safety that we should know?**
  - As we do this work, we need to keep in mind the history. That's the first step in correcting the history
  - Acknowledgement of the Black/Brown folks in the community. Without reconciliation with acknowledgement of harm - I don't know how we can move forward.
  - If the Town and the BPD acknowledged even once that the history of policing has been detrimental. Because that hasn't happened there is so much left to do to create a new system or create a new one.

## *Conversation 2 - Local advocacy group for racial justice and equity*

We must imagine (and strive for) a world with less punitive, more caring alternatives to our current public safety system (for example, a world with accessible, affordable healthcare; housing for all; high quality, free higher public education, etc.)

As the history of policing illustrates, it is a system of racial and class oppression. Regardless of if those are the explicit intentions of individual officers or departments, the institutional imperatives within policing manifest racial and class discrimination. Public safety has to encapsulate people's broader and economic and social needs. That's among the reasons that ideas such as expanding the vision of public safety to include things like youth programs is so appealing. It's more than keeping people from breaking into banks. It needs to be more holistic.

It is telling that the first opportunity to sit down with someone to talk about visions of public safety comes through this task force. Folks are not talking to one another. The public needs to be involved in defining what public safety looks like and it's not clear that has been happening in the Town's departments.

Front-line mental health and in domestic violence situations are ones where the solutions available in the town aren't full enough. But the solution can't be adding roles such as social workers and housing counselors to the police budget and payroll. If there is money to hire a social worker then that person should be doing work more upstream than just with policing where whatever expertise they have is primarily reactive. If we are truly interested in stopping domestic and sexual violence, are we doing anything within the education system to teach about healthy relationships? The public health department also does a good job of public education.

We need to consider models that allow us to provide social services and social supports completely outside of the police department and the armed agents of law enforcement. Food security is a huge issue in the Town of Brookline. We have to address things like that as fundamental issues -- the causes of despair -- as a way of thinking about addressing the causes of crime. However, we see little to no substantive action when it comes to providing/funding community supports. For example, the Town hasn't built a domestic violence shelter.

There is a difference between having a resource out there like the task force or even the Town's CDICR and actually having people in the community know that they are welcome and invited and have people reaching out to them. Even for someone who is really tapped in and is really involved, it is hard to keep up. There need to be multiple avenues for people to have their voices heard.

Unless people are making themselves clear as allies and having open conversation and show themselves as accepting of constructive criticism, it is really intimidating to offer any feedback around public safety in the Town.

It does not feel like anyone who has even a minor critique of the police or public safety system can have a voice given the *immediate* counter of that perspective by members of the Select Board. Town governance needs to include the voices of people who have been on the receiving end of policing.

Right now, the Town is not drawing on all the community leaders that they could in thinking about public safety. For example, Steps to Success contains students, young people, and people who grew up in public housing and their perspectives are not being included authentically. It is also important to tap both the experience of organizations such as Brookline Mental Health as well as those with lived experience of how policing and mental health are currently connected. It's not just input; it is *expertise*. The organizers of the summer 2020 demonstrations are the people whose input we also need to seek. This is the way for us to get beyond the limited perspectives that we have access to via Town government. If we are serious about community engagement, we must make it accessible for working class/lower-income people to run for and serve in elected office.

Recording meetings online can be scary for people. The ability to offer anonymous feedback online is important. But the problem might not just be the channels to provide input. People know how to file complaints and might at times be willing, but it may be that they are concerned that their concerns are going to end up in a drawer. It is important to provide consistent updates to the community on findings so that the community feels like their input is being heard and reflected back. It is necessary to have a formal space to share complaints, but it might also help improve and normalize the process of sharing feedback and complaints if there were an ombuds type of space.

More and better examples of community policing and police partnerships should not be the goal. If you were to ask organizations such as ACE, METCO, or AALS that work with students who can be directly impacted by contact with the police what types of resources are needed to support them, what kinds of job descriptions and titles would emerge?

For the Town to convey that it is interested in change that improves public safety, budget shifts need to occur. Really thorough communication to the community is also needed as well as indicating ways that the community can give ongoing feedback.

### *Conversation 3 - Local advocacy group for racial justice and equity*

The Town does not have a representative vision of public safety because it is missing a planning model of any significance. This has the *intended* consequence of allowing an un-public safety system to flourish. There are no planning tools that involve people who most come in contact with the criminal justice system. Public safety is an institution that hires people with a very narrow mission and set of perspectives. There is no model in the planning process that specifies how the concerns of people of color will be included. If you are genuinely interested in a vision of public safety then you have to ask if people feel safe. The choices that the Town makes in public safety are about making White people feel safe. Public safety should include access to food and shelter. When making budget trade-offs between Town spending on policing resources versus spending on things like food security and the Town chooses the spending on policing then our priorities are not reflected.

It does not feel like there was an opportunity to have voices and perspectives listened to before the task force. There is a climate of fear. Who is going to go talk about public safety with the police department in Brookline? Things like the installation of the police officer at the ground floor of the high school that students of color have to walk past every day is a good example of who is being kept safe and who they are being kept safe from. Sharing the feedback that the presence of armed officers has a chilling effect on people causes a reactive response of being described as anti-police.

The Town needs to put in effort to solicit the perspectives of young men of color between the ages of 14 and 22 because they are likely to be treated negatively by the police. People in South Asian communities and people who are Muslim should be brought in to ask about and understand their perspectives. The Town should then work to combine their perspectives along with the perspectives of experts and academics that it has access to.

It is systemic in the Town that we do not hear from affordable housing residents. It is rare to see people who live in affordable housing present when groups are convened in the Town. What is the Town doing wrong that is keeping them from being present or participating when they are present? No one asks where they are when a group is convened that does not include their perspectives. There is not an abundance of evidence that the police are particularly interested in listening to the perspectives of people living in public housing. Whether it is real or perceived, there is the concern that providing feedback about the experience of policing can put peoples' housing status in jeopardy.

For the Town to be perceived as serious about making change, the element of fear needs to be eliminated from the conversation. You cannot have conversations with people who feel fear. The Town also needs to have a rigorous policy review process within the Town that works to eliminate the culture of fear as well as having skill in looking at data with a racial equity lens. This might include taking the steps of linking this to senior police management's performance review.



The Town should also consider a civilian review board that looks not only at individual complaints but also at broader systemic issues. That review board needs to be inclusive of people who have had experiences with policing (this is inclusive of both positive and negative experiences). There has to be some relationship between the people included in the demographics of people who are being stopped by or ticketed by Brookline police and civilian review.

The CDICR has a citizens complaint group (and a patterns of racism subcommittee) that meets regularly and the Town might consider whether these structures can be used to continue to collect data about residents' experiences of policing and public safety.

## Appendix G: Additional Interviews, Conversations, and Transcripts

Statement by Heleni Thayre, 12/19/20

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1rQg2aT7eU4Jxs\\_yx1pFTDyeQD\\_54C5d8nPp7RwfT-80/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1rQg2aT7eU4Jxs_yx1pFTDyeQD_54C5d8nPp7RwfT-80/edit?usp=sharing):

Testimony via Facebook by Christina Kovach, 12/11-12/12/20

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1F8OSlh0exj-DzKf9-Rs0HocOGAzUzQxJI8cj88RXmY8/edit?usp=sharing>

BHA Resident 1

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/10bvNWmSPomCXF9XBulE3lQOoyrBrVyZO2i2BculAgdA/edit?usp=sharing>

Select Board Committee on Policing Reforms and Task Force to Reimagine Policing in Brookline Joint Public Hearing Wednesday, September 30, 2020

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uiK5vKsF6TQ>

Transcript at [this link](#)

Written statements submitted for the Select Board Committee on Policing Reforms and Task Force to Reimagine Policing in Brookline Joint Public Hearing Wednesday, September 30, 2020

<https://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/22626/93020-Joint-Public-Hearing-Packet?bidId=>

## Appendix H: Research Notes

### 1. Notes of interviews and research from Raul Fernandez

November 19, 2020

I spoke last week with Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler of Cambridge, MA and Rigel Robinson of Berkeley, CA, two City Councilors leading the charge to consider making traffic enforcement a civilian function in their communities.

Both understand that this will require a lengthy public process and that any proposed alternative must maintain public safety while eliminating the disproportionate stops and mistreatment of Black and other people of color that are ubiquitous under the current policing model. Both are also mindful of state regulations that may preempt certain changes to traffic enforcement as well as the pushback from their own police unions and department leadership.

Both communities have begun hearings and have instructed city staff to explore alternatives.

Berkeley first took this up in July – [see policy recommendation here](#). Berkeley has committed \$75,000 to study this issue and to determine a roadmap for moving forward. Those funds are most likely to be spent on consultants with relevant expertise.

Cambridge held a public hearing on October 14th to discuss this issue, which is [viewable here](#). Chi Chi's notes of this hearing are below

[Rahsaan Hall](#), director of the MA ACLU Racial Justice Program spoke at the Cambridge hearing and presented illuminating statistics on the disproportionate enforcement of traffic laws on Black motorists. He's definitely someone we should speak with about this.

Automated traffic enforcement, including speeding cameras, are also being considered as a part of these communities' efforts to eliminate bias in traffic stops. However, there are reasonable concerns about surveillance (who's being watched) and equity (where the cameras are located) that need to be addressed. As Chi Chi pointed out, there is currently no provision for automated traffic enforcement in Massachusetts. It is currently legal in California for red lights, but not for speeding. [Here's a list](#) of laws by state, prepared by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

### 2. Conversation between Chi Chi Wu and Rahsaan Hall, December 1, 2020

Rahsaan Hall is the Director, Racial Justice Program, American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts. I gave Rahsaan Hall an update on the Task Force and our activities, I sent him a link to our Google-viewable working document. Rahsaan informed me that the ACLUM and various stakeholders are having conversations on the state level & with other municipalities on these issues, including traffic enforcement.

To the extent that Brookline adopts recommendations or there is need for advocacy, there could be collaboration with ACLUM

Regarding automatic camera enforcement, ACLUM is still working through its position. With adequate safeguards for privacy, it might be OK? A key issue is to ensure the equitable placement of cameras.

### 3. Chi Chi's notes from viewing the video of the Cambridge City Council Public Safety Committee hearing

On October 14, 2020, the Cambridge City Council's Public Safety Committee held a hearing focused on possible reforms and measures to reduce the role of police officers in traffic enforcement. Please note that the following is not a complete summary of the 2 hour hearing but rather my off-the cuff notes on points that I found interesting or possibly useful for our work.

City Councilor Quinton Zondervan began the meeting by stating that they were not proposing to have unarmed civilians pull over and stop drivers. Instead, they are exploring other methods to reduce racial disparities in traffic enforcement, such as automated camera enforcement and having civilians issue citations without stopping vehicles.

ACLU of Mass Racial Justice Program Director Raahsan Hall:

Mr. Hall gave the example of stopping a motorist for failure to yield as a problematic type of violation, because it is based solely on observation and thus could have a higher level of subjectivity. Seeing high numbers of failure-to-yield citations would be worrisome. Mr. Hall also pointed out that a low rate of issuance of citations for BIPOC motorists could actually be problematic because it means these motorists could have been stopped without cause.

Cambridge Police Commissioner Branville G. Bard, Jr.:

Commissioner Bard was upset because he had been told the hearing was to consider a proposal to shift traffic enforcement to civilians and had been prepared to discuss that issue. [My guess is that Councilor Zondervan figured out that Mass state law did not allow this and he had to pivot to other proposals]

Commissioner Bard also made some interesting remarks about how racial disparities could place a role in traffic enforcement in other ways. It's not just the number of stops that is important. Other factors include:

Duration- there can be disparities in how LONG a police officer stops Black vs white motorists

Results - there can be disparities in whose cars get searched when they are stopped

Reason for stop - police officers could be stopping Black motorists for minor equipment problems vs stopping white motorists for major moving violations

Commissioner Bard discussed using "internal benchmarking" and using a reason – result – duration analysis

Commissioner Bard also discussed how police officers have discretion, gave example of speeding

Note that Cambridge is getting a new records management system, which has a “procedural justice” module. Currently, Cambridge doesn’t have data on race.

Hall: We need data on how much pretextual stops really catch criminals, is it worth it? (This seems to be the same question that Mike Sandman is asking). He noted that police usually respond after the crime has been committed, they don’t prevent it. We also need data on how much traffic enforcement really improves safety, and whether civilians could serve some of the function.

Councilor Zondervan: Can we use civilians for after-the-fact enforcement that does not involve a stop, like a citizen complaint? Can we forgo issuing citations in certain situations? For example, if a motorist has a busted taillight or expired registration, we could send them a letter. After 2 letters, then they are issued a citation. [The City lawyer thinks this is questionable]

Later on, a BU Professor notes that currently under state law, there is no warrant required to search a car, just probable cause, but that states and localities are free to set higher requirements. So Cambridge could require a warrant to search a car.

# Appendix I: Table Comparisons with Other Communities

## “Peer” Communities and their Relevance to Reimagining

When we study any of our municipal services, whether police, schools or parks & recreation, we often seek comparisons with “peer” communities. Those comparisons are less useful when we are trying to reimagine how a service or set of services could be delivered. Nonetheless, it seems worthwhile to look at four groups of municipalities that could be defined as peers to consider whether further study would be useful as part of the reimagining initiative.

1. The first group are Boston-area suburbs with similar socio-economic levels. We often compare our services and our per-capita budgets with Newton, Lexington, Wellesley, and Belmont because they have relatively high per-household incomes and relatively similar demographics to Brookline. But they are fundamentally different in two important ways. First, a significantly higher percentage of Brookline’s housing is rental property. Therefore, on average, families looking for excellent schools but which have fewer assets and, frequently, less income are more attracted to Brookline than to other suburbs west of Boston.

And second, as home and rental costs have increased, Brookline has seen an increasingly bimodal distribution of income, as quantified by the 2013 report from the Brookline Community Foundation, *Understanding Brookline*. The BFC report showed significant growth in the number of households with \$15,000 or less in income and a decline in the number of households with somewhat higher and mid-level income, up to \$100,000. We are a more densely populated community with an income distribution that is more typically urban than the Boston suburbs with which we tend to compare ourselves. We probably need to consider what our neighboring municipalities can teach us, but they do not seem likely to be helpful in reimagining policing in Brookline.

2. The second group might be defined as “enclave communities” – independent municipalities that are partly or mostly surrounded by or immediately adjacent to a major city. Municipalities in that group include Santa Monica, CA (Los Angeles); University Park, Texas (Dallas); Clayton, MO (St. Louis); Beverly Hills, CA (Los Angeles); Evanston, IL (Chicago); and Bala Cynwyd, PA (Philadelphia). All of these municipalities -- even Beverly Hills -- have roughly similar population densities and racial demographics to Brookline and roughly similar mean and median household incomes. See table [at this link](#).

The useful comparison here may be the range of services the municipalities provide, whether through their police departments or through some other agency, and the budgets for those services.

3. The third group are municipalities that have begun working on their own reimagining initiatives, or have already developed new models for delivering the services provided by traditional police departments. Eugene, OR and its “CAHOOTS” program for responding to mental health issues and the initiatives just now starting in Cambridge and Berkeley, CA and under discussion in Madison, WI. The demographics of those communities are strikingly dissimilar from Brookline and from each other,, but it is probably not a coincidence that the political orientation in those communities resembles Brookline’s.

4. The fourth group are Eastern Massachusetts municipalities with different socio-economic levels but similar populations, such as Malden and Weymouth. Finally, there is the City of Boston itself, which often looms large in the discussion of policing in Brookline. A table of information about police budgets, size of police force, FBI crime statistics and more for these municipalities is at [this link](#). An analysis of this table seems to show that for smaller communities such as Brookline, Malden and Weymouth, the strongest correlation regarding size of police force and budget per capita is with the median income in the community, not FBI crime statistics.

## Appendix J: Racial Composition of Nearby Municipalities and Neighborhoods

The racial composition of Brookline and the municipalities and Boston neighborhoods from which traffic originates that drives through Brookline is as follows:

Neighborhood/Municipality	White	Black	Latinx	Asian
Brookline	74.1%	3.2%	7.8%	15.9%
Allston	54%	6%	14%	22%
Brighton	65%	4%	11%	16%
Fenway	60%	4%	12%	20%
Jamaica Plain	55%	11%	24%	6%
Longwood	70%	6%	10%	11%
Mission Hill	44%	16%	20%	18%
West Roxbury	69%	10%	10%	8%
Newton	77%	3.3%	5%	14.5%
Wellesley	80.3%	2.9%	5.1%	12.4%
Natick	81.8%	1.9%	4.1%	12.9%
Framingham	69.5%	7.3%	16.1%	7.9%
Southborough	81.7%	0.7%	3.9%	14.4%
Dedham	84.3%	8.2%	8.7%	2.7%
Norwood	84.4%	7.2%	6.8%	5.4%
Walpole	85.1%	1.5%	10.5%	5.4%
Watertown	82.8%	1.6%	9.2%	9.9%
Cambridge	66.1%	10.7%	9.5%	16.7%

Data from:

Boston Planning & Development Agency Research Division, Neighborhood Profiles, August 2019

U.S. Census Bureau, QuickFacts (2019): Brookline, Newton, Wellesley, Natick, Framingham, Southborough, Dedham, Norwood, Walpole, Watertown, Cambridge



## **Appendix K: Traffic Enforcement Statistics**

Provided by Former Chief O'Leary

The tables for this Appendix are available at this link:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uRK4Jo-DOkZj5B\\_Fp3eKR9V9AvTo6zzu/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uRK4Jo-DOkZj5B_Fp3eKR9V9AvTo6zzu/view)

## Appendix L: Changes to the SRO Statute

This is an account of the changes made to the SRO statute (G.L. c. 71, § 37) by the policing reform bill, which Governor Baker signed in December 2020.

Thank you to Associate Town Legal Counsel Michael Downey for reviewing and editing this summary.

### I. Highlights

- The legislature created a special commission. This commission will "develop and review the model memorandum of understanding [MOU]" between police departments and schools, and make recommendations for changes to it. The commission must convene no later than March 31, 2021 and shall develop the first MOU no later than February 1, 2022 for implementation starting in the 2022 school year.
- **The police may only assign an SRO at the request of the school superintendent.**
  - This is in contrast to the prior language ("Every chief of police, in consultation with the superintendent...shall assign at least 1 SRO") which required the Chief to assign an SRO.
  - Text: "(d) For the purpose of fostering a safe and healthy environment for all students through strategic and appropriate use of law enforcement resources and to achieve positive outcomes for youth and public safety, a chief of police, at the request of the superintendent and subject to appropriation, shall assign at least 1 school resource officer..."
  - Section (f)—language which appeared in the previous statute as well—does not override the requirement for the superintendent's request. It indicates that if 1) the superintendent has requested an SRO, and 2) the police and superintendent together decide there isn't enough money for one, then the police will request that a state trooper stand in as an SRO.
    - Text: "(f) Notwithstanding subsection (d), if the chief of police, in consultation with the superintendent, determines that there are not sufficient resources to assign a school resource officer to serve the . . . school, the chief of police shall consult with the department of state police to ensure that a school resource officer is assigned..."
- The superintendent must, every year, 1) report to the dept of elementary and secondary education and 2) **make a public presentation to the school committee.**
  - This must include "(i) the cost to the school district of assigning a school resource officer; (ii) a description of the proposed budget for mental, social or emotional health support personnel for the school; and (iii) the number of school-based arrests, citations and court referrals made in the previous year disaggregated as required by the department of elementary and secondary education."
- The superintendent and police chief must review the SRO's performance every year.
- The superintendent and police chief must adopt, "at minimum," the MOU developed by the commission; they may add additional requirements; and **the final MOU must "be made public and placed on file annually** with the dept of elementary and secondary education and in the offices of the school superintendent and the chief of police."
- The dept of elementary and secondary education will "collect and publish disaggregated data regarding school-based arrests, citations and court referrals of students to the department and shall make such report available for public review."

## II. Further Changes

- **Committee on Police Training and Certification**

- Delegated Responsibility to “develop an in-service training program designed to train SROs,” as defined in MGL c71, §37P
- Training shall include:
  - Differences in legal standards regarding police interaction and arrest procedures for juveniles compared to adults;
  - Child and adolescent cognitive development, including instruction on common child and adolescent behaviors, actions and reactions as well as impact of trauma, mental illness, behavior addictions, and developmental disabilities on child and adolescent development and behavior;
  - Engagement and de-escalation tactics, specifically effective with youth;
  - Strategies for resolving conflict and diverting youth in lieu of arrest
  - Hate crime identification and prevention training curriculum including acquisition of practical skills to prevent, respond to and investigate hate crimes/incidents and their impacts on victim communities;
  - Anti-bias, anti-racism and anti-harassment strategies;
  - Bullying and cyberbullying;
  - SRO interaction with school personnel, victim communities and build public cooperation with law enforcement agencies.

- **Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission**

- Police Officer must possess special certification to be eligible for SRO appointment – Current SROs have until December 31, 2021 to receive said certification.
- Strangely, I do not see any description of the standards necessary, if any, to obtain the special certification.

- **MGL c71, §37L** – This section sets forth notice requirements to school personnel regarding their reporting requirements regarding child abuse and neglect, and a student’s possession or use of a dangerous weapon on school premises.

- **New Paragraph Added**, Prohibiting school department personnel and SRO to disclose the following information to law enforcement (subject to exceptions):
  - Immigration status
  - Citizenship
  - Neighborhood of residence
  - Religion
  - National origin
  - Ethnicity
  - Suspected, alleged, or confirmed gang affiliation, unless it is germane to a specific unlawful incident or to a specific prospect of unlawful activity the school is otherwise required to report.

## Appendix M: Literature Review

A brief literature review of peer-reviewed articles was conducted to learn about previously conducted research and advocacy efforts related to community-based police programs and its impact, if any, on people living in affordable or public housing.

While there are a large number of journal articles published in the last three years which discuss the difference in perceptions of police by white versus BIPOC Americans (DeSoto, 2018; Scott Carter & Corra, 2018), there are few recent journal articles which focus on perceptions of current police community-based programs by white versus BIPOC community residents. More journal searches will be conducted to track down peer-reviewed articles on this topic.

Recent survey analysis research conducted by Stein and Griffith (2017) on resident and police perceptions of community policing found that the racial composition of a community with a community-based policing program has a strong impact on both resident and police perspectives of the program. Stein and Griffith conducted a study of three neighborhoods in an unspecified Midwestern city and found that the neighborhood with a significant majority white population (74%) called Shoreline had very different perceptions of community police programs than the other two neighborhoods, Mountain Top and Saints Village, which had far lower white resident populations (0.6% and 13.1%, respectively). Their results found that “More than half of the police officers indicate police are well respected in Shoreline (54%) and police have a good rapport with residents (54%). Less than 30% of the officers report respect and rapport with residents in Mountain Top and Saints Village (p. 147).

While Brookline, Massachusetts has different demographics than the neighborhoods studied in this article —income level and education level, for example — the marked difference of perspectives on community policing programs between BIPOC and white residents in the Stein and Griffith (2017) article is something to keep in mind while continuing to collect community perspectives on the W&T program. In the recent public forum jointly organized by the Reimagining Policing in Task Force and the Police Reform Committee on September 30, 2020, the residents who voiced pro-police perspectives often were middle-aged, or older, white speakers [10 out of 11 speakers were middle-aged or older and/or white], while those who expressed concerns about over-policing and police responses in Brookline tended to be younger residents and/or BIPOC [10 out of 13 speakers were young and/or BIPOC].

### References

- De Soto, W. (2018). Do police officers in the USA protect and serve all citizens equally? *Social Science*, 7(190), 1–11. doi:10.3390/socsci7100190
- Scott Carter, J., & Corra, M. (2018). Seeing discrimination: Does acknowledging structural determinants of inequality impact support for the use of force by police among whites? *The Western Journal of Black Studies*, 42(1 & 2), 18–28.
- Stein, R. E., & Griffith, C. (2017). Resident and police perceptions of the neighborhood: Implications for community policing. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 28(2) 139–154.

# Appendix N: Interviews

## Administrative Interviews

### Walk & Talk Officer Interview transcript: Dec. 16, 2020

#### Attendees:

Bonnie Bastien  
Kimberley Richardson  
Anne Weaver

Walk and Talk officers: David Pilgrim, Tim Stephenson, and Michelle Lawlor. Sgt Casey Hatchett, BPD W&T supervisor.

Members of the public attended the interview but did not participate in the interview, as it was not a public hearing.

[**TRANSCRIPTION NOTE**: This transcript is not word-for-word verbatim; many of the comments have been shortened or summarized. Careful attention was made to not change the substance or meaning of the responses.]

*Q: How would you describe your job?*

**Officer Stephenson (TS)**: A position where we are working within the BHA community. to get familiar with the people who live in the BHA properties, we are there so they can get familiar with us and we can get familiar with them. If it's not on a first name basis, then at least it's by sight. they can recognize us and feel that police are more approachable, just not in car.

**Officer Pilgrim (DP)**: I second what TS just said. Our job is easier the more familiar we are with people.

**Officer Lawlor (ML)**: The W&T program is so valuable to the community; to bring connection to people who may not understand or fear bad things about the police, to make connections with the community.

*Q: What are your stated goals?*

**TS**: Our biggest goal is to get to know the families who live in the BHA community, to be a resource for them when needed and to break down the barriers that people typically talk about between people who live in socio-economic households, POC, so it's not an "us against them" ideology going on. So we are one cohesive unit working together.

**DP**: On top of that, our other goal is to provide police services. If someone has a package theft, or some other crime, they could report it during a day shift or they could wait until we are working, that's one of our goals, to service the cause.

**ML**: Being there for these kids who might have had a bad experience with a police officer and are in a bad position. Breaking down these barriers so they trust us, whereas they might not trust police. So that's what we do.

*Q: Do you think you are achieving these goals?*

**TS:** Most definitely. People have our cell phone numbers, we get calls. I can get calls all hours of the day from people who are just wanting to talk, get some advice, where to go to for help. If we can't help them, we put them in touch with people who can help them, we do what we can.

**DP:** Most definitely, I am the newest W&T officer and my phone rings at 2 am. I think making people comfortable with us is our goal.

**ML:** We get phone calls at all hours of the night – we get kids in the middle of night from kids who aren't in a safe space and need a ride home. We are that bridge that people connect to, they trust us. It's appreciated.

*Q: How do you measure these achievements? Your helpfulness? Aside from anecdotally, how do you evaluate this?*

**TS:** You mean quantitatively? I don't consider it anecdotal. These are experiences that I have had, over many years, 17 years. These people feel comfortable enough to call us. They don't shy away from us when we walk by. I have never heard anyone say "Hey cop, keep going."

**DP:** The evidence is that they keep calling. They wouldn't continue to call if they didn't find us useful. Not everyone in every community will find it useful to be with police. If we can make an impact on a few people, it's better than leaving them to be abandoned.

**ML:** It's not a numbers game. It's more that people are calling us instead of 911. We are building bridges with these kids, these kids can trust us. They look beyond a uniform that may intimidate people. It's not like a number that we can give you...

*Q: How does the W&T program differ from other police units in Brookline?*

**TS:** About us being assigned to a specific area – the whole town is separated into sectors, not just us. The town is divided into 9 separate sectors. We are called the W&T unit, but the other sectors have patrol units.

**DP:** We have more flexibility than officers in other sectors. We have more time because we are the only ones who do that. Because our segment of population is a little bit smaller, we don't have the hustle and bustle that other officers do. For us, we have the time and ability to build the relationships.

**ML:** The program itself does so much more than regular patrol duties. We do camps, we bring pies. I set up a basketball program at the Teen Center for the past 5 years. That's something that patrol division doesn't do.

*Q: What is your job like on a normal day? What would be an unusual day?*

**TS:** There aren't any usual days. You never know what is going to happen. It could be a day when nothing is going on, it could be a day when a lot of people are outside, things are busy, we are talking to lots of people. We could get a call from an elderly person who is worried they were a victim of hacking on their computer. So we may spend 45 minutes with them to ease their mind, that they didn't lose their savings account. We may help someone fix their wheelchair, or walker.

*Q: Where are you located on your shift?*

**TS:** We cruise around the developments, we walk around, we go on bicycles sometimes.

*Q: How many families/residents would you say you interact with daily basis? Weekly? Monthly?*

**TS:** That's a number I don't keep track of. We could talk to 20 people a day or we could talk to no one. Again, it depends on the day. If it's a really cold day, or pouring rain, we might not see anyone outside and we might not interact with anyone on a face-to-face basis unless we get a call from someone.

*Q: Do you go in the buildings?*

**DP:** Only if we get a call. We don't patrol the hallways, if that's what you mean.

**ML:** Also in the winter, you can find us at any HS basketball game because we love going and cheering those guys on. We also go to the elementary schools and show our presence there, and be a support system for those guys, as well.

*Q: How many BHA crimes are reported? Weekly? Monthly?*

**TS:** Again, I think that's a number we aren't going to have, maybe that's something Chief O'Leary could tell you? It's not a number we can pull out of a hat and give to you.

Sometimes we get 2 reports a week, other times we may get 10 reports a week (of crimes). A missing package, a bike theft, a domestic violence call. What I can say, but don't take this verbatim, historically crime rates in BHA communities are less than the neighborhoods around them. A big part of that is because we are visible, people do see us and that we provide a benefit to the residents at the BHA community.

*Q: The BHA pays the police department \$15,000 annually. Where does that money go? What does it pay for - specifically?*

**DP:** That's an administrative question, we wouldn't know. If there is funding involved it's above our level.

**Casey Hatchett:** It's my understanding that it's a grant, BHA is not paying us, they give us a grant and it's been there since the inception of the program. It has supported programs with youth, used to purchase masks during COVID. It's been used in the YPI program. To supports programs like that or events, for example, a Halloween celebration.

*Q: On the BPD W&T web page, it says "these officers are highly visible to the residents." What do you think it's like to have officers be "highly visible to residents" as is stated in the program description on your website?*

**DP:** I think it depends, like I said earlier. A lot of people are really happy to see us. And some people don't want to see us. I don't think we are injecting us into people's lives. That's not what we are doing, that's their choice.

*Q: On the BPD W&T web page, it says "We find they are more apt to speak with the Walk & Talk officers, let them know of potentially developing problems and report crimes." What's an example of a crime reported specifically to the Walk & Talk Officers on onsite?*

**ML:** I have multiple examples, there was a stabbing last year. They called a W&T officer and told us exactly what happened. That's an example of the trust that we build.

**DP:** I have had people tell me about a disagreement with a child, or a significant other. Or a package theft. I think that happens a lot.

*Q: On the BPD W&T web page, it says "These officers spend a large amount of time interacting with juveniles throughout the town" Why would officers feel this is necessary at BHA? Why don't they interact with my [Bonnie's] daughter in this way?*

**TS:** Like I said, it's necessary in all of Brookline. Not just at BHA. Like Michelle said, we interact with kids at the HS, at the elementary schools, and other places. And what's wrong with police officers interacting with kids? We are one cohesive community working for the benefit of all.

**DP:** I think the BPD tries to connect with youths across the town. We aren't in the patrol division, we are in the community service division. But this doesn't mean that other officers aren't also interacting with kids in other ways, like SROs at the schools, for example. When I was growing up, I didn't have police officers who looked like me. I didn't have that role model. For me personally I do it because that's why I became a police officer. I think it's important to have role models who look like you. Who impart a strong sense of honorability. I think that is very important for our kids.

Our sector is BHA. So, we in the community service division can take that time. But it's not just BHA. It's also the high school, the community events we run, the Teen Center.

*Q: Police officers are handling an enormously broad set of needs in the community. Why are armed police officers the ones that need to be doing this work? Why are all of these responsibilities happening in the police dept?*

**TS:** Because no one else is doing it. We around 24/7, we don't shut down at 5:00 pm like social services do. Or shut down at 3:00 pm like schools do.

**DP:** It takes a village, we aren't saying that we are the only ones to do it. We welcome others to do it with us.

**ML:** Also, sometimes we get into situations where we are trained to be in those situations that others, such as social workers, aren't trained to deal with. Like domestic violence situations. Or mental health situations, or we are dealing with a kid who isn't getting along with their parents. And social workers aren't trained to deal with those situations.

**TS:** Also, we aren't doing this all on our own. We work with the Brookline MH Center and the schools. We work with other community organizations, it isn't just us.

*Q: How would you define "public safety?"*

**DP:** It's multi-faceted. It starts in the schools, I guess from the police side, public safety is making sure people feel comfortable walking around any time anywhere. We just want people to feel safe. I don't see public safety as different in BHA than in any other part of the Brookline community.

**TS:** I think it's hard to define. I serve the whole community. I don't really know how to put a definition on that. I think people feel comfortable when they see officers driving down the road, walking on the street. People don't look at us as bad or evil. I'm not saying that all cops are good, there are bad people in every profession.

**ML:** I think we can provide services to juveniles and elderly in BHA that other officers aren't able to do in their sectors.



*Q: What about the people in BHA who don't feel comfortable with the W&T officers? Who feel surveilled, who feel they are being watched? We have heard from some BHA residents who feel that way. Who feel that they are being watched because they are the "poor people in town."*

**DP:** No one is being surveilled in that manner, ever. That is not what our job is. The reason we are there is to be that bridge to help people away, to divert them away from the criminal justice system.

**TS:** In the 17 or 18 years that I have been part of the program, I think the program has evolved. I don't think we are out there over-policing, I think we are helping to bridge gaps, to form relationships. 99% of the time we are keeping relationships going, with children, with the elderly people. I feel very strongly about this, we are out there to help people. For people who do feel uncomfortable, come talk to us. We don't want you to feel uncomfortable. I am part of this community and am proud of my work.

[End of interview]

### **Walk & Talk Interview transcript with Matthew Baronas: Jan 19, 2021**

#### **Attendees:**

Bonnie Bastien  
Kimberley Richardson  
Anne Weaver

Interviewee: Matthew Baronas, BHA director of property management. Mr. Baronas is retiring in May 2021. They are hiring his replacement, a search is happening now.

Members of the public attended the interview but did not participate in the interview, as it was not a public hearing.

**[TRANSCRIPTION NOTE:** This transcript is not word-for-word verbatim; many of the comments have been shortened or summarized. Careful attention was made to not change the substance or meaning of the responses.

*Q: Were you a BHA employee when the Walk & Talk program began?*

Yes – I have been in my current position since 1988 and I was involved at the beginning of the program.

*Q: If so, were you involved with the program at its start?*

Yes. Chief O'Leary was the Chief at that time and he was very interested in community policing; de-escalating initiatives. We made good connections with our residents especially youth and became a resource for conflicts between neighbors, kids having difficulties with their families. Worked with our social service partners, Brookline Community MH Center in particular.

Mediating problems and looking for alternative solutions. My estimation was that it was a popular program, continues to be, but especially in the beginning with our residents.

*Q: What has been your role with the program?*

I don't have an official role but I have a strong relationship. As the director of property management, I supervise 4 property managers. So as a program director, I probably have the strongest relationship with the officers in the program -- although my property mgrs. prob have a stronger relationship than I do.

We review issues that are going on with our residents on a daily basis and on a periodic basis. Every other week we meet with our attorney to discuss cases where we are in some stage of eviction action -- we rarely evict tenants but we do need to address lease violations from not paying rent to harassment of neighbors, criminal activity, health and safety issues failure to report income.

We might reach out to one of the W&T officers to ask for their help in intervening, or they might be aware of a situation where they want to talk to us -- concerns that residents have, as well. Issues such as reasonable accommodation, or to help them with an issue that the family is struggling with.

*Q: Who is currently in charge of the direction of the program?*

The BPD

*Q: Are you aware of how the W&T program started? The reason for starting the program, who initiated the program (BHA? BPD?), and why?*

Community policing was seen as a progressive part of policing. Chief O'Leary is a real student of community policing tactics -- the program was something they presented to us. No single event that led to this program.

*Q: Was it based on another program somewhere else -- in another town or city? Who designed the program?*

Not that I know of, I think it was a program designed by the BPD.

*Q: What is your understanding of the goals of the Walk & Talk program -- both broadly and specifically?*

Specifically, BPD noticed that there were people that were repeatedly getting involved in the criminal justice (CJ) system and were struggling to see what they could do as a community to divert people from getting arrested and tracked into the CJ system. [To have] three police officers that are dedicated to our residents and a part of the social service fabric in the community with the goal of preventing people in the direction...

The W&T officers have always been involved in youth mentoring programs, sports programs. But they are also experts in, got a lot of contacts...

It's not just youth but also the council on aging, the teen center, the Brookline MH center....

They (BPD) have similar goals to the BHA in that we want to provide our residents that are available to help our residents thrive, to overcome the disadvantages that they have...

*Q: Do you recall how the payment of \$15,000 was agreed upon? (\$28,659 - with inflation)  
Was it a grant? A direct payment from the operating budget as it is now?*

In the early days of the program some of the compensation was derived from the budget overtime, toward the ends of the BPD fiscal years, they would run out of the money and have to pull officers back into different duties. It would be noticed by our residents who would ask where the officers went. So the exec director Brian Cloonan (he retired about 10 years ago) – reached out to the BPD and asked if BHA could help out. This money was not a grant, it was part of the BHA budget.

*Q: There doesn't seem to be a contract between the BPD and the BHA. Are you aware of a contract or an MOU?*

No, not that I am aware of

*Q: In the early days of the program in the 90's, what did the Walk & Talk program look like?  
How has it changed through the decades?*

In the early 90s there were 2 officers, they had summer basketball leagues, weight training with youths. They were building the networking throughout town, working closely with our property mgrs. It was pretty balanced between us reaching out to them and them reaching out to us with issues and concerns. We were building those relationships.

Today I see a group of more diverse – more women, POC – serving as W&T officers. I see they have better training – along with most of the police officers – in community intervention and mediation. They are ready to jump right in to defuse situations.

They offer us some options that can be really helpful in resolving conflicts that we have that could lead to legal action. More formal mentoring relations that they have with our youth; stronger connections with our seniors and people with disabilities.

*Q: Follow-up: What kind of programming happens in the Senior buildings?*

Not as much formal programming, but they (BPD) are always willing to help with internet scamming, workshops on empowerment, less feeling of vulnerability. But I think more day to day helping to deal with people who are struggling with isolation, MH issues, etc.

*Q: Has anyone ever asked the residents how they feel?*

I don't think, no, I mean we haven't. When we have done "needs surveys," I don't think there has been that focus. Springwell, for example, who we partner with for elderly population needs, does evals of seniors of their experiences with Springwell programming.

Brookline MH Center, I believe they have done surveying with us in the past, I think W&T program has been a part of those surveys.

Our social service programming has grown, esp. in the last ten years or so...

*Q: What are the commonly stated complaints about the W&T program, if any?*

I expect that I would hear of complaints – I can't recall any complaints about W&T officers. I am being totally honest with you, there have been complaints about police intervention over the years, not often but occasionally, but I don't recall complaints about W&T officers.

*Q: Police officers are not social service officers, right? So, in the beginning of the program in the 1990s, when the BPD came to BHA with the idea of this program – to put police officers in the properties, was the thinking that this was a social service program?*

That's a good question, a good observation, there is probably some truth to that. I can't speak for the BPD but it was partly to build a more positive relationship between police officer and our residents. I think that was a major part of the thinking, to create positive relationships, trust, but I think the program has evolved considerably and I think, in my experience, I look at the W&T officers similarly to what occurs with our other social service partners. Let's really put our heads together and what can we offer in these difficult situations, before they become problematic. I think some of it, is our tenants are reaching out to the BPD repeatedly, complaining about a neighbor. Often we are also aware of those problems and the W&T officers are helpful.

*Q: Follow-up: If there are complaints by residents would they be recorded somewhere?*  
We keep tenant files for 7 years or so.

*Q: Is the program necessary to keep going?*  
I think it is a really positive resource for our residents.

*Q: Brookline residents don't have these programs, why do BHA residents need this resource?*  
[BHA residents] are low income, which creates additional stress, they struggle with child-care issues and other issues. There are barriers and hurdles and issues that many of our residents to a greater degree, exacerbated by financial issues, have...

*Q: People who rent in Brookline, it's so expensive, some of those people struggle living paycheck to paycheck but they don't have police officers working with them. Also, BHA gives \$15,000 to police people in housing...*

We spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on social services – mental health services, aging services. I can't speak for the BPD but as a person who has spent my entire career working in affordable housing see this program as a uniquely positive and beneficial program for our residents in many ways....It's been my job to get as many beneficial services for residents to thrive ... I know that there are other needs in Brookline, we have a limited resource, we can't help everyone in Brookline who needs affordable housing, and my focus is on providing them with any service that might be helpful to them to thrive and prosper. It takes a lot of people coming from different directions to help each other.

*Q: When BHA is thinking about what services residents need, do you talk to residents about what services they want to see? What about if residents tell you they feel uncomfortable by the W&T program?*

We wouldn't be an effective housing authority if we didn't value the opinions of our residents.

*Q: If you are really concerned about BHA residents' opinions, please ask Danielle Mendola to send out a W&T survey to see if people do feel safe.*

I thought there was a survey already sent out about this?

[End of interview]

**Telephone interview with Michael Alperin, BHA Executive Director: 12/16/20**

Personal views:

- Has heard residents express their concerns that the W&T officers are only focused on BHA housing and that feels like surveillance. They feel like no other neighborhood has that kind of presence and it seems like the policing of Black/Brown/poor people
- Feels inexperienced in experiencing and understanding W&T because he's only been there for 5 months and during a pandemic - hasn't been on the ground
- Can't provide a real perspective here

History of W&T - Is personally unaware of any contracts or agreements between the BHA and the BPD

- Matt Barones (staff) has been there for 30 years and has the knowledge of the program and its evolution - we can bring him in to speak to this if necessary.
  - He is retiring in May

\$15,000 between BHA and BPD - Sgt. Hatchett referred to this as a grant

- Mel Kleckner is currently researching this annual payment
- This may have been a grant at some point
- Right now it is a check cut directly from the BHA's operating budget and sent to the BPD for their line item.
- This payment, if stopped, could be spent on other housing needs
- Sgt. Hatchett - made it clear that it is an important gesture to the BPD for their services
- AC has made it clear that they find it inappropriate

Recently there have been a lot of break-ins (people picking locks) - the nature of these issues could be many things - not necessarily characterizing them as a crime ring. But he has a lot of concern for domestic violence survivors housed at BHA (they are a priority at BHA).

- Alperin stated that this is not an argument for or against W&T - only a recognition of the necessity to make sure residents feel safe, particularly domestic violence survivors, in one way or another (cameras as deterrents?).

Surveillance:

- Only the ED (Alperin) can view the surveillance cameras unless he gives written authorization, which has happened a few times in the past 5 months he's been on the job
- The policies on surveillance were recently provided to the Town's surveillance committee

[End of interview]

## **BHA Resident Interviews**

### **BHA Resident 1**

**Phone Conversation - 1/24/21**

**Black femme**

### **Perspectives on W&T:**

*Q. How do you feel about the police being present in the BHA community?*

A: How much more intimidating would the police be if they weren't building relationships with BHA residents?

*Q. What kind of services do you receive from the W&T program?*

A. They make turkey dinners for Thanksgiving. That is really generous.

*Q. Should police be the ones to provide these extra services (Thanksgiving meals, pumpkin painting, other programming) and social services?*

A. We already have access to social services. There are 1-800 numbers to call.

### **Other statements/issues surfaced:**

Interviewee stated that BHA has policies that require police to report instances of DV or other crimes they are called to to BHA (*\*note\* the BHA says this policy does not exist as described*). This creates a danger of the resident being evicted. There is a zero-tolerance policy around these issues. This results in residents not reporting when they are a victim of violence/crime.

Interviewee stated that if Walk & Talk officers were removed, BHA would hire a private security company that would be worse than the W&T program. It would be more expensive and it would make living in the BHA even worse than it already is.

Interviewee gave examples of the bad state that her apartment is in and that they would never invite anyone to their house because it's that bad.

[End of interview]

## **BHA Resident 2**

**Telephone interview on Jan. 24, 2021**

[Note: The person interviewed stated they were unsure if the police were W&T officers or regular police officers.]

"In 2013 I was just moving into my apartment located in the High Street location of BHA. My brother and boyfriend were moving things in and out of the U-Haul. I saw the police watching us for about 10-15 minutes. They soon approached my brother and my boyfriend and began to question them. I immediately ran downstairs to see what was going on. The police stated that someone had called them to make a complaint about us moving in. They stated, "no one was aware that you were moving in".

My brother and boyfriend were very upset with the police and refused to answer their questions. I was new to this community and did not want to make any waves, so I reluctantly answered all their questions. I knew they were lying to me about the complaint, but I also did not want issues or drama, so I let them question me.

After they left my brother and boyfriend told me I should have gotten their badge numbers to make a complaint."

[End of interview]

## **BHA Resident 3**

**Telephone interview on Feb. 1, 2021.**

"As a new resident in Brookline and to BHA I felt the presence of the police immediately. I did not know anything about a Walk and Talk Officer. I just knew that I saw the police quite often and right away I felt like I was being surveilled. When I would venture out to other areas of Brookline I did not see a police presence the way I saw at BHA and this made me uncomfortable.

My son felt this surveillance early on and was followed home. He once stated to me "anytime something happens in Brookline, they always call me".

I have had to call the W&T officers when my family was experiencing an emergency, but I would have preferred not to. Do other parents have this experience in Brookline or do they just call 911 when something happens?

To be clear, this does not feel like special treatment or social support to BHA residents, this feels like policing at its Best!!!"

[End of interview]

## Brookline Resident Interviews

### Brookline Resident 1:

**Public FB posts from Christina Kovach (former BHA resident) on the Brookline Townwide Discussion page  
12/11-12/12/20.**

**Consent for use of name in these records?:** Yes (via FB direct messaging with C.Kovach)

"I grew up in Brookline housing. While I do think that the voices of the people who are targeted by this program (or any program) should be heard, I don't think it takes someone with experience in housing to see how this program is deeply, deeply problematic. But as a BHA resident myself, yes, it was very invasive and uncomfortable to have a known police presence in my neighborhood. I asked about the mission statement because I was curious where and why this program came from in the first place. I have serious doubts it was based on actual data."

Response to a FB group member's comment by CK: "Yes, there are specific issues. Bonnie mentioned them above. Also, there is a difference between assessing "interactions" with officers and assessing a program. I personally think the program is problematic because it doesn't seem to have been based on data.

It was harmful to me personally because of the way it made me feel as I moved about my neighborhood growing up and through adolescence. Try to imagine walking into CVS, and having an officer with a gun follow you around. He doesn't bother you, he doesn't really even interact with you. But he is there to make sure you don't steal. He's got his eye on you even though you know you're not a criminal, you know you aren't doing anything wrong, but there he is, just watching. Watching YOU specifically because you are poor, literally. It felt yucky and constant.

And now as an adult, as an attorney, as a mother, and as someone who now lives in a bougie ass Brookline neighborhood, in hindsight, I can unequivocally say that that type of oversight and surveillance of me (and my brothers) as we grew up, was not helpful, it was harmful in a lot of measurable and impactful ways. That type of police presence and stigmatization was formative and has had lasting effects on my positionality and the way I have pursued many aspects of my life—anywhere from career choices to friendships. I grew up being watched by law enforcement, specifically because I was poor. That's a problem."

Bonnie Bastien: "I hate that this happened to you."

CK: "Bonnie Bastien To all of us! It was a big neighborhood with a ton of kids and teens. No one even questioned it. And it wasn't outwardly hostile or traumatic. But it was formative and impactful, truly. I didn't let my daughter play outside because I didn't want her to be "flagged" and "known" as one of The Neighborhood Kids."

[End of Facebook discussion]



## **Brookline Resident 2**

**Telephone interview on Jan. 26, 2021.**

**Black femme**

*Q: Why were you compelled to reach out to us about the survey?*

- Watches Townwide page on FB
- Expected Brookline to be a more understanding community about minority experiences. However, what is posted on the FB page doesn't always reflect that shared understanding/experience.
- Sees lots of great activism and meaningful work as well.
- Lots of people need to hear individual experiences in order to relate to it. You can read all the newspaper articles you want, but until someone shares their experiences and perspective - it's easy to block out.

Personal stories: (all within the last year and a half):

1. Brookline officer monitoring construction site. Crosswalk blocked off and an officer was standing where people would normally cross. Her anxiety was enough to motivate her to walk entirely around the block rather than do what most people did, which was J-walk in front of the officer.
  - Fear and anxiety about interacting with the police officer
  - This was in contrast to her white partner who didn't hesitate with the officer
  - She has never had a good interaction with police
2. Older Black man was stopped in his car on the corner across from Trader Joe's in Brookline. He was being accused of stealing from a store.
  - She stopped to be present and watch as a bystander, even though she felt that as a Black person she may not be as helpful as a white person in this situation.
  - Quickly the officers called more and more officers to help with this man (the man in the car looked to be around 60, not doing anything "disrespectful" - didn't seem to be a threat in any way)
  - 6 officers standing around this man accusing him of theft
  - Quickly became harassment - "how could it be anything other than intimidation to surround this one man (a minority) with that many officers and question him"
  - There are protocols in place for this scenario that the officers did not do (ask a few questions and ask him to come voluntarily to the station).
  - Because they hadn't done any of those things, it became clear that they didn't have proof that this man committed a crime and were really just being intimidating and hoping to catch him in the act of something else.
3. May or June - heard car horns outside her apartment. Saw 4 police cars, several residents outside, an EMT truck, and a Black man and a Black woman (lots of blood on her face) in a car being questioned by police.
  - Stood by again to act as a witness
  - Other people assumed the situation might be a domestic violence (DV) incident that caused an accident - woman covered in blood, man not bloody but very upset

- She feared for the man, but thought DV was unlikely because police let the couple stand close to each other - police took statement, woman got in EMT truck
- She stayed to remind the man that he can remain silent if he does get arrested
- 5 police cars
- Everyone left the man alone (EMT took woman) and he found that he was locked out of his car
- Turns out man/woman got in accident and she hit her head (not dv)
- Police left without assisting him - He was now locked out of car - no one waited to see if he was ok, offered no medical assistance, no one made sure he could drive or that his car was safe to drive.
- Demonstrated why we need other services. Better trained people wouldn't have left him there after that traumatizing situation. Others services would have been beneficial.
- Her takeaway
  - While this was not an egregious offense, if police are truly community servants, why didn't they offer to drive him home or stay around to make sure he drove off safely, etc.?
  - Shows how pointless some police services are.

*Q: Do you have a vision of what you think public safety should be? Do you see that reflected in the choices the Town is making?*

- She thinks about "Circle Justice" a lot, which is an alternative to child services
  - It's a community- based group of people whose first interest is the community, not their bonus or quotas or the gov't (this can really depend on your community - can be challenging)
  - The person affected picks the people in the circle so its a safe space
  - People are brought together in this way from the community to act as moderator, emotional support person, etc.
  - This is what social workers are for - to assist people when other resources fail - provide council and
  - Also many social workers feel more similar to police than this vision
- What's needed is a sort of bookkeeper of resources that can provide the emotional support needed before a person is connected to those resources.
- There's a lot of mending - we need to tear down the system and start from scratch. It will never be functional until there is a lot of healing in the community.

#### Personal Story:

\*\* "I will never be able to have a good relationship with police officers because the relationship and the history is too deep already" \*\*

\*\* "Growing up, my peers and I were so used to going to the police station to introduce ourselves to the police officers in our communities so that they would know who we were so we wouldn't need to interact with them spontaneously in situations. There was constantly this idea that you have to get to know them before they can decide who you are in a moment. I've lived in MA for 8 years and every community that I live in I go introduce myself."

- I'd call my friend who is a firefighter before I called the police.
- COVID 9pm curfew - She works until 9pm daily and wasn't getting enough exercise. She was afraid of walking on her own on the street after curfew and getting in trouble or accused of doing something criminal or inappropriate
- She strictly adheres to COVID restrictions more than others because if there were anyone who would get in trouble, it would be her more than others.
- "There's so much Black and Brown people do in communities to make themselves feel safe and then they are constantly surrounded by stimulus that tells them that they are not safe no matter what they do"
- "Even if an officer was working in a positive way in partnership with the housing authority and providing social services, I would not be comfortable using that service. I don't think I could not trust it. I would not sign-up or use those resources."

*Q: Do you see the way you think about public safety reflected in the public safety choices and solutions available to you?*

- Yes and no - I disagree with what people are proposing relating to reforming the system rather than rethinking the system.
- In Brookline we are appropriately policed. Not like Forest Hills or Dorchester
- People here are more involved and community oriented
- We are appropriately policed
- Comes from the demographic of Brookline - only knows 1 other Black person here.
- Brookline is out of touch with what a typical experience with police is

*Q: To what degree would you say you have a voice in creating or informing the Town's current public safety strategies?*

- I think there is a lot of opportunity - I feel like I could but I'm fearful of the reaction of the community
- Option is there and space is given for people that look like me to get involved, but it's not set up in a way that makes it comfortable for me to speak up with an opinion.
- "I don't put my BLM sign in my window because it feels too dangerous - because of things that are written and comments that are made (FB Townwide) I am not putting that on my window."

**\*\*** “Ironical that the public library is across the street from the police station - library should be a place of exploration and safety - If I were a Black teenager in Brookline, I would not be hanging outside by the library - feels like too much of an opportunity to get into trouble.” **\*\***

*Q: Do the Town's current public safety initiatives draw on information and expertise from community voices and community leaders that are important to you?*

*If no, who are those community voices and leaders? What insight and expertise do you think the Town is missing out on?*

- The community I would like to hear from doesn't live in Brookline. There are very few voices of color

*Q: Do you perceive any barriers to participation in conversations about policing and public safety?*

- “Yes, there's a danger in openly stating my opinion”

*Q: Do you have recommendations for ways the Town can continue to collect data about policing and public safety?*

- Issues with our survey
  - Similar to why people don't fill out the census
  - Packaging - she would of thrown it away
  - If she were an immigrant or more barriers I wouldn't of filled it out - looks like the government - doesn't look like it's coming from people who want to support her
- How to improve the survey
  - Be in the community setting up shop
  - Have people in housing getting their neighbors to fill it out
  - Get the survey in businesses by the door
  - Needs to feel safer to fill out.

*Q: Are there Town-community collaborations for public safety (with or without police) that you are aware of?*

- no

○ *Q: If no, are there collaborations that you think should be started?*

- It all falls on the training - Collaboration should have a Black/Brown organization that does trainings for these services
  - Levels of trainings - mental health
  - Interactions with Black/brown people
  - How to approach people

○ *Q: If no, are there collaborations that used to exist that you think should be resumed?*

- n/a

*Q: Thinking about the places where you think change needs to happen, what pieces would need to be in place for you to believe that the town was serious about making those changes?*

- Putting their money where their mouth is - not just for show
- Need to see buy-in from people she respects - professors, professionals (mental health, community leaders outside of systems of oppression)
- Police budget is astronomical for how little they need to do in Brookline
- Some of that money put into community efforts

*Q: What else don't we know about how you experience policing and public safety that we should know?*

- As we do this work, we need to keep in mind the history. That's the first step in correcting the history
- Acknowledgement of the Black/Brown folks in the community. Without reconciliation with acknowledgement of harm - I don't know how we can move forward.
- If the Town and the BPD acknowledged even once that the history of policing has been detrimental. Because that hasn't happened there is so much left to do to create a new system or create a new one.

[End of interview]

## **Appendix O: Police Reform Committee Survey on Walk & Talk Program**

### **Reform Committee Survey of the BHA/BPD Walk and Talk Program**

**Are you familiar with the officers from the Brookline Police Department's "Walk and Talk" Unit? (Officer Tim Stephenson, Officer Michelle Lawlor, Officer David Pilgrim & Officer Kristen Healy)**

☐ Yes

☐ No

**How often do you see "Walk and Talk" officers in the BHA community?**

☐ Very rarely/never  
month

☐ A few times per year

☐ 1-3 times per

☐ About once per week

☐ More than once per week

☐ Do not know

**How often have you personally interacted with "Walk and Talk" officers (Tim, Michelle, David, Kristin)?**

☐ Very rarely/never

☐ A few times per year

☐ 1-3 times per month

☐ About once per week

☐ More than once per week

☐ Do not know

**Thinking about your last interaction with a "Walk and Talk" officer, which of the following best describes what the officer did? Please leave blank if not applicable.**

☐ Officer took a crime report  
(e.g.

☐ Officer assisted in non-criminal issue

family/neighbor issue)

☐ Officer made an investigatory stop

☐ Officer provided information

☐ Social interaction

☐ Officer made an arrest

**Thinking about your last interaction with a "Walk and Talk" officer, which of the following best describes how you feel about the officer's professionalism? Please leave blank if not applicable.**

☐ Very dissatisfied

☐ Dissatisfied

☐ Neutral

☐ Satisfied

**For the next set of questions, please consider your experiences with "Walk and Talk" officers.**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
"Walk and Talk" officers and residents have a good relationship.					
I feel uncomfortable around "Walk and Talk" officers.					
The "Walk and Talk" program makes the BHA community safer.					
I want the "Walk and Talk" program to continue in Brookline Housing Authority.					

**Thinking about the "Walk and Talk" program, what changes (if any) would you like to see?**

	Decreased	Increased	Kept about the same
The number of "Walk and Talk" officers assigned to work with the BHA community.			
The presence of "Walk and Talk" officers at community events for seniors.			
The presence of "Walk and Talk" officers at community events for families.			
The presence of "Walk and Talk" officers at community events for youth.			

**Is there anything else you would like to share about your thoughts on the "Walk and Talk" program?**

---

**How do you describe your gender?**

☐ Woman

☐ Man

☐ Non-binary or non-conforming

☐ Prefer to self-describe

**How old are you?**

☐ 17 years or younger

☐ 18-35 years old

☐ 36-50 years old

☐ 51-64 years old

☐ 65+



**How long have you lived in BHA properties?**

- ☐ Less than 1 year                      ☐ 1 to 5 years                      ☐ 5 to 10 years  
☐ 10 to 20 years                      ☐ 20+ years

**How would you describe your race? Please select ALL that apply.**

- ☐ Black/African American                      ☐ Hispanic/Latinx                      ☐  
Asian/Asian American  
☐ Native American/Alaskan                      ☐ Middle Eastern/North African                      ☐  
White/European American  
☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**OPTIONAL:** Would you like to be contacted to further discuss anything asked in this survey or otherwise related to the “Walk and Talk program?” If so, please leave your information below.

---

**For more information or to discuss this survey, please email:  
chaynes@brooklinema.gov**

**Community Perception of the Brookline Police Department Walk and Talk  
Program**

*Preliminary Report*

**Introduction**

The Walk and Talk program is a community-oriented policing program of Brookline Police Department (BPD) officers in the Brookline Housing Authority (BHA) community in order to develop a relationship with the residents. A paper survey was developed by a subcommittee of the Select Board’s Committee on Policing Reforms in consultation with BHA staff. The survey was available in English, Spanish, Chinese, and Russian and was disseminated by mail to all 808 BHA residents’ addresses provided by BHA staff to assess public perceptions of the Walk and Talk program. Although 808 surveys were disseminated, 38 were returned to sender so the study population is 770, and with 70 responses gives a 9% response rate.

The survey collected both qualitative and quantitative data investigating perception of the program, perceptions of the officers participating in the program, and frequency and quality of interactions with the officers. The 70 responses were collected and input into a google form where analytics were performed.

## **Demographics**

Brookline Housing Authority houses over 800 residents across 12 different residential complexes. With respect to race and ethnicity, 56% of residents identify as white, 25% identify as Black/African-American, 14% identify as Asian, and 15% identify as Latino/Hispanic. 66% of residents identify as female and 34% identify as male. In regard to age, 56% of BHA residents identify as 65+. Of the 70 responses received, approximately 2/3 were from women and approximately 1/3 were from men which is directly representative of the study population gender demographics. The majority of the responses were from residents over the age of 65 (n=41) and 51-64 years old (n=12). There was a wide range of responses in regard to how long the residents were living in BHA properties. Approximately 1/4 of responses were from each of the following ranges, 20+ years, 10-20 years, and 1-5 years (n=18, 18, 19 respectively). Half of the responses received were from residents who identified as White/European American (n=32) and about 1/4 identified as Asian/Asian American (n=14). There were six responses from residents who self-identified as Black/African American and six responses from residents who identified as Hispanic/Latinx.

## **Public Perception and Interactions with the Officers**

A majority of the residents were familiar with the officers in the Walk and Talk unit of the BPD (n=36). Approximately 20% of the respondents had seen the officers at least once a month (n= 15) but the majority of respondents interacted with the officers a few times per year or less frequently (n=38). When asked about how often they personally interact with the officers, only a few residents said that they interact with them on a semi-frequent basis of at least once a month (n=6) whereas most residents had few, if any, interactions with the officers within the past year (n= 49). Most interactions residents had with the officers were either social, the officer provided information, or the officer had assisted in a non-criminal issue (n=12, n=6, n=14). Few were actually in relation to any sort of police-activity (n= 4).

75% of respondents felt satisfied or very satisfied with the professionalism of the officers (n=30). A majority of residents agree or strongly that the officers have a good relationship with the residents, feel the program makes BHA communities safer, and would like to see the program continue. Most residents do not feel uncomfortable by the presence of the officers in BHA housing. Across the board, the community would like to

see the presence of the Walk and Talk officers remain the same or increase at the events held within BHA residencies and would like to see an increase in the number of officers in the Walk and Talk program.

Qualitative data provided many nice sentiments about the officers, naming and thanking some of them individually. Some of those comments included "They are kind in times of crisis - nonjudgmental to my family" and "I think as a BHA resident ; the "Walk and Talk" program should stay because it's a great program specially for our kids. Officer Tim is a great person and the kids and us love him. All Officers are wonderful and so helpful for our community." There were a significant number of responses saying they were unfamiliar with the program and/or would like to learn more about it. There was much sentiment related to enjoying the program but wishing there were more interactions and community engagement with the officers, such as "The officers should engage more with members of the community directly and not simply "drive through" the BHA" and "I feel it's important for them to be just "hanging out" in a fun friendly manor at family and youth events, so that their presence in the community isn't feared or looked down upon".

## **Limitations**

While the data received through this survey has been informative in regard to the Walk and Talk program, there are some limitations that could limit the scope and interpretation of the data. Since the majority of residents who responded to the survey were above the age of 65, this primarily captures the sentiments of the older BHA residents and might not accurately reflect the thoughts and experiences of the younger residents such as families and children. It was also predominantly answered by residents who self-identified as white, limiting the applicability to the more marginalized racial groups within BHA. There was also an "other" section on the "How would you describe your race?" question that allowed respondents free text answers in conjunction with the prepopulated responses. We received a variety of answers that were then difficult to include in the rest of the analytics as there was only one response from multiple free text answers. One of the largest limitations is that many of the respondents did not answer all of the questions. Since it was a paper survey, some people were unaware there was a back and subsequently did not respond to those questions.

## **Appendix P: Emailed Feedback on the Walk & Talk Subcommittee Draft Report**

### **Email 1:**

Ms. Fields,

I wanted to express my thoughts and feelings about the Walk & Talk Unit but was not comfortable speaking on the Zoom meeting. Could you please forward this to the W&T subcommittee of the Reimagining Task Force.

I'm curious on why there was no mention of how the Walk and Talk unit enables the average citizen to feel more comfortable reporting criminal behavior to a police officer, they know personally and are comfortable with. The absence of mentioning how Walk and Talk deters criminal behavior is worth a discussion. I'm also wondering if the people that are having the negative experiences with police are criminals? Does Walk and Talk make BHA residents feel safer? Does it have more of a positive effect than a negative one? Personally I feel that even if only one person is more likely to report a crime to an officer, they know and are comfortable with, it benefits the community. I would like more information on how Walk and Talk affects the community positively, it feels like an assumption that they are making BHA feel like a police state where people are being watched. Having a positive police presence allows people to see that the police are there to help. Unfortunately the world has bad people in it and an authority presents is needed . The Walk and Talk unit seems to be an example of good community policing.

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider my thoughts.

Respectfully,

Kristin Stephenson

**Email 2:**

Hi folks,

I was impressed by your report. I think it makes sense for social workers/ mental health professionals to respond to calls involving people experiencing emotional distress or mental illness. This assumes the town budget can afford this worthy experiment and that in any given case we can know what the nature of the problem is—so that those who respond are in a position to safely intervene.

In the case of School Resource Officers, I am less certain. A program on WBUR today (between 1:30 and 2 pm.) illustrated the issue. Featured on this program—and sorry I can not recall the place...possibly a town in Oregon—was a young BLM activist who made it clear that he was exempting his town's police from his general critique. The tenor of his comments was that the police in his town were trusted and friendly, they were known because of a sense of connection between them and the community...that they were in fact experienced as part of the community. This notion that a connection between police and community can actually be reform idea in itself, can build trust, can help to professionalize and “civilize” (if I can use that word)—all this would seem to be advanced by having students be able to meet with and relate to police officers—and vice versa. As for social workers, there are already SWs and counselors in our schools.

My kids were in the Brookline schools 30 years ago, and I recall they liked their DARE officer and developed a good relationship with him. I'd like to think he felt the same way, and that the experience had a mutually positive impact.

Best,

Bill Schechter  
76 Brook St.

# **Appendix Q: Walk & Talk Subcommittee Public Hearing on the Draft Report**

## **Task Force to Reimagine Policing in Brookline Walk and Talk subcommittee Public Hearing notes Feb 3 2021**

[**NOTE:** This transcript is not word-for-word verbatim; many of the comments have been shortened or summarized. Careful attention was made to not change the substance or meaning of the responses.]

Approximately 20-27 public attendees.

### **Public comments and Subcommittee members' responses are below:**

#### **Jenelle A, Brookline resident, BHA resident:**

High St veteran. I really feel like a lot of our problem is actually a problem of BHA housing policies. It doesn't make that sense that if any other Brookline resident has a problem with police, the police don't report it to your landlord.

Other housing authorities across the country have a budget for security and they end up with armored vehicles while gangs run rampant. Can anyone imagine how much that would cost? I wouldn't want my tax money to go to that. [Talks about the \$15,000 being a grant, which is apparently not correct.]

Can we remember that if it weren't for BHS policies we wouldn't feel policed in our homes. If the police came to our homes it would be our personal business like any other resident of Brookline. But because we live in the projects, it's your landlord's business. So if you are a victim of domestic violence (DV) you are going to hide it. Because you don't want to be homeless. If you get caught being a victim in this project you become homeless. To me that's the problem. BHA policy.

#### **Matthew B, Asst Director of BHA:**

The Violence Against Women Act prohibits eviction based on someone being a victim of DV. It offers a number of protections for victims of DV and we would never evict someone for being a victim of DV. I just want to clarify that, thank you.

#### **Jenelle A, Brookline resident, BHA resident:**

I'm annoyed because I know that to be a lie. That's why no one wants to raise their hands [here]. No one wants to be targeted by BHA. If I didn't need my kid to graduate in Brookline, I would move.

Things are broken, things aren't taken care of. You are like something they would scrape off their shoe. Black mold, asbestos, lead paint.... But let's replace doors that aren't even broken. I just don't get that.

If it wasn't for the W&T program, I wouldn't even want to live here. I am in my bathroom right now feeling like I am getting sick [from the apartment]. But my kids can go out at midnight and be safe. Even if they are Black.

**Question in the Q&A:**

How will you reconcile your report with Jenelle's lived experience?

**Bonnie B, W&T subcommittee member:**

As part of our research, we questioned both the BPD and BHA if there were specific policies on the books—either at the BPD or at the BHA, or both – of police being required to report incidents to the BHA. We were told that there were no policies like that on the books. That doesn't mean it might not happen; just that there is technically no policy that requires that to happen.

**Anne G, Brookline resident:**

Thank you for this report; I think it's really important what you are doing. Has there been any outreach to other neighborhoods outside of BHA to ask if they felt a need for programs such as W&T? That it might be beneficial?

**Anne W, W&T subcommittee member:**

We haven't reached out to neighborhoods outside of BHA for W&T specifically. But we have been, as a task force, reaching out to all residents of Brookline to find out what community supports and services might be useful for them. That we could potentially build.

**Anne G, Brookline resident:**

Yeah, I am just wondering if people might not be comfortable with a police program such as W&T being in their neighborhood. A lot of times if you see a police officer on the street, you might bristle and wonder why they are there. I am wondering about their emotional affect, how people might feel.

**Anne W, W&T subcommittee member:**

It's going to depend on who you are and what your experience has been, how you might respond to police officers offering those services. We are, as a task force, reaching out to all community members to hear about their thoughts and experiences.

**Ryan B, Brookline resident:**

What sort of new services do you see the town creating?

**Bonnie B, W&T subcommittee member:**

This needs to come from the community. Needs to be a community-led process. We don't want to prescribe what those services might be. Perhaps a 24/7 service that doesn't need to be a police officer. But we need to hear from the community on what they need.

**Emy T, Brookline resident:**

Thank you for the hard work on this. I want to validate some of Jenelle's comments about BHA and police reporting to one another, we need to address this lived experience, even if it isn't officially on the books. I want to thank her for her courage and willingness to share that today. I think she has a point about residents' discomfort of showing up here today. I think this should be acknowledged, and we shouldn't expect folks to show up in such a public space. In terms of the \$15,000 that the BHA now gives to the BPD, wouldn't it be great if the residents of BHA could decide how that money is spent.

**Jenelle A, Brookline resident, BHA resident:**

I want to thank Emy. It's the absolute truth. So many people would benefit from knowing that, if they call the police, it wouldn't be contingent on their residency. If I have an argument with my 15 year-old and the police come, I shouldn't have to come down there for a meeting. Let's say I beat up my boyfriend; he can't even call the police on me because he knows if he does me and our kids will be homeless. I personally spent 3 days babysitting the kids of a lady who had her leg broken. And she was evicted within a month.

I've been here a decade; when do I get a fresh coat of paint? You wonder why people are depressed? They tell you that they think you have a mental disorder and that if you don't get help, you're out of here.

**Dan Brossman [spelling?]:**

If the subcommittee proposing immediate termination of W&T? Or gradual?

**Bonnie B, W&T subcommittee member:**

We are leaving that process up to the community and what they feel they need. We have found that police providing these services to residents; there are professionals who can do this work better. But we are leaving that transition up to community members; our subcommittee on community engagement lays that out in their report and their public hearing is later tonight.

**Anne W, W&T subcommittee member:**

I am adding our report recommendations in the chat and you will see that community process and input on how this may happen is part of our recommendations.

**Sam T, former Brookline resident:**

I want to reiterate appreciation for Jenelle. I want to hear from her and let her lived experience guide this session. Thank you.



**Jenelle A, Brookline resident, BHA resident:**

I am so humbled by what the person just said. I was just cut off and I am not sure why. There has been more than one time that the BPD has had interactions with me at that type of scale. I had another resident just disappear for three days. And the resident's father asked me what he should do. I told him to call the police. He asked them (BPD) if he could leave his child with Jenelle and they said, yes, we know her, that's ok. No problem. The police, in these scenarios, did what police are really designed to do – to serve and protect. They could have made a big report. In other places, DSS would have been involved, but because of our relationship with the police at BHA we were able to see the situation through without the family's stability being upset. You know? They [BPD] would still do everything they do even if W&T didn't exist. Because that's who they are. They understand. They get it. We are talking about a different police dept altogether. There are just so many parts of BHA that don't work. That's what we should be looking at; that's what needs to be fixed. No one's tenancy should be questioned because the police were called.

Our [school] resource officer in the high school is an unbelievably loving kind individual. You will not find better people surrounding our kids. The minority in Brookline is the *poor*. Not Black or white; it's poor or rich. *That's* the minority.

**Bonnie B, W&T subcommittee member:**

While we are waiting for the next public comment, I want to make it clear that our intention is never to make people feel less safe. Just to make everybody feel safe.

**Deborah B, Brookline resident:**

Is there some way that you can survey tenants who experience the W&T program? An anonymous survey tool, maybe break it down by age group?

**Bonnie B, W&T subcommittee member:**

There is a survey that went out, not by us but by the Police Reform Committee. Most of the respondents were elderly and white. The details are in our report. It's hard to say that enough responses were gathered in order to get a clear picture of what residents are feeling about the W&T program. Our way forward is likely through community organizing and one on one conversations to learn about community safety, the W&T program, and what people would like to have in the community.

**Deborah B, Brookline resident:**

I have another question. What percentage of people in Brookline have regular interactions with law enforcement? Some of these kids see them at school, some of them see them in their housing. What are the cumulative impacts from exposure from multiple sources in young people?

**Anne W, W&T subcommittee member:**

We don't know at this point. It's a complicated question, but at this point we don't have it.

**Bonnie B, W&T subcommittee member:**

This was in our survey, sort of? In our Task Force survey that went out to 25,000 people.

**Question in the Q&A:**

"If people like the police, how can it be a negative experience?"

**Kim R, W&T subcommittee member:**

If one person has a negative experience with the police, then it's a problem because that one person is a part of the community.

**Bonnie B, W&T subcommittee member:**

Thank you for coming and participating and listening. The work does not end here, please reach out.

**Raul F, Task Force to Reimagine Policing Chair:**

What you have heard here has put into sharp focus the challenges that the government of Brookline and of BHA has in really understanding what people's experiences actually are. What I hear is that there is a lot of fear out there. Fear of losing their housing and mistrust. Those are the deeper issues that we need to address.

Policing programs like the W&T program are addressing the symptoms of problems. What we need to invest in is the root causes of these problems. This isn't just about what we should or shouldn't do with any one program, but instead putting our effort into community engagement to get to the root causes of these problems.

[End of transcript of W&T subcommittee public hearing]

## Appendix R: Interview Notes

### Key points from the stakeholder interviews:

The descriptions below are highlights only. If you are interested in more complete notes on these interviews, please see our past meeting minutes.

#### 1. **10/29/2020: Interview with Annabel Lane, social worker with BPD (funded through the State Dept. of Mental Health) and Lt. Jennifer Paster, BPH**

*Q: What is missing from community services now and what is needed?*

A: Feels that Brookline has good crisis services. We need more medium-level services, before someone is in crisis, to do community outreach and engagement and ability to travel to the person. Services including housing assistance, food stamps, relationship building (people are too isolated). More readily available access to emergency financial funds -- e.g. grocery debit cards or gas cards.

*Q: Re CIT program. Are there “refresher” trainings following the 40-hour CIT training? Is there ongoing supervision re CIT model?*

A: No additional mandatory trainings. There are non-mandatory one-day trainings available to officers on topics such as dementia, family resource centers, etc. BPD officers are required to do 48 hours per year of trainings but those trainings are set by the Municipal Police Training Committee and include a range of topics outside CIT.

No direct supervision of the CIT model; there is supervision related to “family unit” issues (checking on kids who may be vulnerable, for example) but not specific to CIT training.

*Q: Tell us about collaborations with other local service models re MH and crisis calls?*

A: BEST team: Great resource but limited because they only respond to adults with Mass Health or no insurance. (Not true for kids in crisis -- they respond to any kid in crisis no matter what the health insurance.) Not always the fastest crisis service; BEST team can take 40-60 minutes to arrive at the place of crisis. And, importantly, the person in crisis has to agree to be evaluated by a MH clinician in order for them to respond.

Brookline Center for Community MH: No formal relationship but a collaborative relationship. BPD can't formally refer to the Brookline Center but can recommend that people in crisis connect with the Center. BPD refers people to the Center's Safety Net program, which is emergency financial assistance for local residents in need.

Monthly meetings with local agencies, including the Brookline Center, Council on Aging, BPS.

*Q: What type of follow-up is done with the Brookline community member after a crisis that CIT has been involved with?*

A: BPD will refer cases to CIT when appropriate and Annabel as needed. BPD does not have a social worker specifically assigned to them and Annabel has other responsibilities, however, will go out on cases when BPD refers them.

#### 2. **11/5/2020: Interview with Ian Lang, Executive Director, Megan Smith, Director of Community Services, and Heather Lykas, Chief Strategy Office, Brookline Center for Community Mental Health:**

Q: *What is missing from community services now and what is needed?*

A:

- More pre-crisis services in order to prevent situations where emergency services are needed.
- Peer support services:
- CAHOOTs type crisis team models:

Q: *How does the Brookline Center currently serve vulnerable community members and people in crisis?*

A: Runs the “Bright” program for kids returning to school after an extended mental health (or physical health) crisis.

Just starting a case management program. Have secured funding for two case managers who will work with community members who are already seeing a therapist at the Brookline Center for individual therapy. Case management services will include ADLs (activities of daily living) and connecting the person to community resources, such as unemployment, housing assistance, health insurance, food stamps, etc. Case management services aren’t covered by health insurance so separate private funding for this program was needed. Also homelessness prevention program,

Q: *Tell us about collaborations with other local service models re MH and crisis calls?*

A: Collaborates with many town agencies and orgs including the BPD, BPS (has Brookline Center social workers embedded in the local schools), Housing Authority, Dept of Health.

Relationship with the BPD CIT program: Strong and productive relationship with police department. Meets on a regular basis with BPD to talk about high-risk individuals in the community. In certain crisis situations they will call the BPD in order to section someone, i.e transport the person to a hospital for a MH evaluation. Has partnered with the BPD on clothing drives, neighborhood events, etc. Megan Smith raises an occasional problem with negative police responses to people in crisis, usually related to race issues, Black or brown people in crisis being treated differently -- more aggressively -- than -- white people. Smith says she has witnessed three such interactions herself and has been told by residents about “many more.” Says “This [MH crisis intervention] shouldn’t be part of their [BPD] job. They’re not always equipped to handle this.” They don’t have the training that Mental Health Clinicians have to handle complex issues.

Q: *What services and supports do you wish were in the community to better serve vulnerable people and people in crisis? What would you like to see included on our Task Force’s recommendations list next February?*

A: The center would like to explore how it can get more out into the community, have mobile units, have teams of people getting out to engage the community and do outreach to avoid crises and be proactive. Have same day crisis support services. Is there a way to allocate resources to the center? Would also like to have a peer support program. Police should be utilized when appropriate, but would prefer less reliance on police. Barriers exist such as insurance, funding, hours availability, getting people in quicker.

Q: *What about people falling through the cracks? How do you avoid that?*

A: The center works closely with other social agencies, DPH, Steps to success, Housing etc.

### **3. Interview with Tim Black, Director of Consulting, CAHOOTS program, Eugene Oregon. January 7, 2021.**

*Introduction of Tim Black and CAHOOTS consulting model:*

Tim Black working with CAHOOTS in 2010 as a crisis worker/first responder, has a background in street outreach. Transitioned into the role of Program Coordinator 5 years later. As of Summer 2020, he is now doing outreach/consultation to other communities interested in using this model.

CAHOOTS is currently working with Rochester NY and Portland OR to set up programs that will likely be up and running by Feb/March 2021. They have been working with Portland OR for about 2 years. Rochester's program is moving faster than Portland's, due to a nationally-reported Rochester police interaction with a person experiencing a mental health crisis last summer and who was killed at the scene.

CAHOOTS recently set up a crisis response program in Olympia Washington. They also helped start a clinician partnership called the Star Program in Denver, CO. CAHOOTS is now involved in conversations about crisis mobile services in Oakland, San Francisco, and Knoxville. They are also seeing interest in their model from Canada.

*Q: Public education: How is the public informed about the CAHOOTS model and crisis intervention plan? What ways have worked best to communicate to the public about the program?*

Leveraging local media is important, including free local newspapers. We try to be part of the conversations that happen in the media — when news happens, we hope to be included in those discussions.

Reaching out and having conversations with small neighborhood associations, grassroots groups, business orgs, school classes. Describing the service and how to access the service.

In addition to public education about the service, try to fold in some common de-escalation training techniques, so that people have another tool in their pockets—skill-building. So they learn how to use de-escalation tools without having to call CAHOOTS.

Manage public expectations as to what the outcome of a CAHOOTS intervention might be — that it might not solve everything in one go. Since there aren't always sufficient community-based services available to support someone post-intervention, this often leads to a person needing several CAHOOTS interventions before adequate post-intervention support is achieved.

Trainings and presentations are another outreach tool. Create emotional literacy – incl. suicide awareness, common MH symptoms and presentations, social media hygiene -- for young people. Every 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grader in Eugene and Springfield Oregon gets a presentation from CAHOOTS in their health class.

The outcomes of doing these high school presentations are (1) a lot more teens and families are utilizing the CAHOOTS services; and (2) the public high schools have embedded the CAHOOTS teams (an EMT and a crisis worker) within their school systems. Every HS in the greater Eugene, Oregon community now has a CAHOOTS team embedded in the school.

*Q: Provide us with a brief explanation of the CAHOOTS model.*

White Bird Clinic is a federally-qualified health center, serving the county in Oregon where CAHOOTS originated. As White Bird Clinic grew, they began doing more and more community-based crisis work, as well as outpatient medical services. Started collaborating with LEO and the public safety system.

White Bird formed the CAHOOTS program in 1989. CAHOOTS team staffing models are comprised of an “EMT basic” and a “crisis worker.” Crisis workers generally have a minimum of undergraduate-level education.

CAHOOTS calls for service are facilitated through the local public safety dispatch system. So, if someone calls 911, or the non-emergency public safety line, they will press “1” for police, “2” for Fire/EMS, and “3” for CAHOOTS. By being directly tied into that public safety call system, the police no longer need to go to the initial welfare check; instead, CAHOOTS teams are the first responders for those calls.

If a dispatcher answers the call, the CAHOOTS program becomes another resource for them. When CAHOOTS enters into a service contract with a city or county, the service agreement includes an outline for the CAHOOTS scope of work – i.e. what types of calls that are most commonly referred to CAHOOTS teams. The dispatcher manual is then updated to include a section specifically on CAHOOTS services in order to help the dispatcher decide which calls/codes should be sent to CAHOOTS. Sometimes calls get misidentified, but the team that initially goes out on the call will then call the most appropriate team in.

Tim Black estimated that the CAHOOTS team receives 70-80 service calls per day in the Eugene Oregon metro area of approximately 200,000 people.

The CAHOOTS team calls for police backup “less than once” a day. These police backups are used for either increased escalation of physical aggression and/or involuntary holds (when someone is a threat to themselves or others). Black stated, “When/if we reach the situation when a voluntary interaction is not going to serve that person in the moment, then we need to ask for police intervention in order to get the person to a hospital to receive the care they clearly need/further evaluation.”

Because of how CAHOOTS is designed -- because the program responds to a wide swathe of these intervention calls -- the city/county pays a fraction of the cost that it would pay if police and/or the fire dept/EMS were sent out for these types of calls.

So, there is a strong return on investment to the city. CAHOOTS has been able to directly work with the Eugene city council on increases to the CAHOOTS budget whenever there’s been the need to expand services.

*Q: How long does it take to have the CAHOOTS team respond to a call?*

Response time varies according to the need and what else is happening in the community. CAHOOTS operates in the same way that a patrol officer would according to the priority of the need. If the team gets two calls at the same time, they will decide who gets the first intervention depending on the need. They triage the need.

*Q: Does CAHOOTS operate crisis phone lines?*

White Bird Clinic has a crisis call line (separate from the CAHOOTS team). Sometimes people will call early on in the crisis so that a team doesn’t need to go out immediately.

*Q: Does CAHOOTS intentionally hire people with lived experience? Peer support?*

Yes, it’s a priority for us, although it isn’t an explicit part of our recruitment. We have many staff who have lived experience and that experience is valuable for our work with others.

One unforeseen complication CAHOOTS has had is that people with a criminal history don't pass the required background checks. In order to wear a "police camera," you must pass a Homeland Security background check. So unfortunately, people who have been incarcerated/convicted of a crime are often ineligible.

*Q: Scale-ability for a town as small as ours? Should we consider partnering with a neighboring town?*

"We're not franchising." We are helping to build programs which respond to the unique needs of each community.

Springfield has 65,000-70,000 people, and it's sufficient to be covered by one CAHOOTS unit with 24/7 coverage. There aren't a lot of services directly located in Springfield but the service agreement includes accessing the services in Eugene, which is a much larger city with more community-based services.

Brookline could also cross the border into Boston in order to connect people with resources there if necessary. There are a lot of ways to accomplish this. Creating a regional coalition for a geographic range is another idea.

There might be other resources that need to be addressed before setting up the CAHOOTS model.

*Q: Aftercare and follow-up with people for whom CAHOOTS has been called?*

As first responders, CAHOOTS has scarce time for follow-up with clients after the phone call, given that they have 60 service hours in a day and often 80 calls per day.

CAHOOTS encourages people to call them as often as they need to.

CAHOOTS refers people who need case management, or other services, to other White Bird departments or to other community-based organizations. (Rental assistance, outpatient healthcare, outpatient therapy, addiction treatments, etc.)

*Q: Tell us about funding*

The initial funding for CAHOOTS in 1988-89 was through a public safety fund reallocation-- instead of hiring as many police officers as planned, the city funded the CAHOOTS program. Since then, we have our own funding allocation within the Eugene/Springfield budgets, i.e. separate funding from the PDs.

Our funding for the program overall comes from 4 areas:

1. Springfield: 25% town, 75% state grant funding from HHS
2. Private fundraising with philanthropists
3. Per member, per month wrap-around payment from Medicaid. This is not an individual bill—CAHOOTS does not charge clients—but they are saving the Medicaid system money in diversions from the ER, etc., Medicaid recognizes the cost savings and gives us a monthly wraparound payment.
4. "CAHOOTS Act" (Sen. Ron Wyden, Oregon) now in U.S. House of Representatives, in Rep. DeFazio's (Oregon) committee. This would allow Medicaid to fund 95% of mobile crisis program costs for the first 3 years that the program is up and running.  
Link about the act: <https://www.wyden.senate.gov/news/press-releases/wyden-cortez-masto-propose-bill-to-reduce-police-violence-during-mental-health-crises>

*Q: How does CAHOOTS save money?*

CAHOOTS itself costs \$2-3 million dollars.

Two core savings:

- Medical: Diversion from EMS and hospital system: \$8-10 million savings. Eliminates many ambulance rides, ED services, etc.
- Diversion from criminal legal system: Insufficient cooperation from police for strong data here, but the costs of nights in jail, tickets, court time, etc. Could say that for every dollar spent on CAHOOTS, at least \$5 is going back into the community.

CAHOOTS also supports and uplifts small community organizations.

*Q: What is your biggest challenge right now? Things we should be aware of?*

These are issues that a lot of people are going to be passionate about; a lot of people want seats at the table. Should develop a Community Advisory Board comprised of people who directly experience the services, including the unhoused community.

Need buy-in from the people at the head of town departments and orgs. Chief of Police, Fire Dept., municipal leadership, CEOs of community-based orgs, etc.

Communities' expectations and sense of entitlement towards the CAHOOTS program.

The rapid development of grassroots programs/movements in the area meant that, whenever someone set up a march, people would put CAHOOTS on their flyer before confirming that CAHOOTS could actually be present. Some organizations which vandalized local police headquarters included CAHOOTS in their organizing, which couldn't work, because CAHOOTS needs to be able to work with the police.

CAHOOTS can't solve every conceivable problem. For example, CAHOOTS itself doesn't have a shelter. They can support a person in the moment, but without ongoing supports, there's only so far they can go.

For example, that manifested last summer with a petition to reallocate money from the police department to CAHOOTS, which would have been an unmanageable amount of growth, and wouldn't actually create more beds. CAHOOTS responded to say that the money needed to go to homeless shelters, etc.

*Q: How do you decide if a call should go to CAHOOTS rather than the PD? For example, a violent scene or weapons involved? What if someone has a knife? Is there a grey area?*

Every situation is a grey area. Every situation is unique. Even when we talk about weapons, we need to know context. We try to find out as much as possible before sending a team out. For example, what kind of knife is it? Is it a butter knife or a really sharp carving knife? Is the person outwardly threatening someone with the knife or does this person often carry a Swiss Army knife that he uses for cooking?

When we have those moments, it's an opportunity for us to engage with "watch command" and talk about what's going on, or if there is another resource. Or maybe we will do a joint response. Or maybe the police are going to make that first encounter but we are 3 minutes away, around the corner, just out of sight so as soon as the officers tell us that it's safe then CAHOOTS comes in and the officer and leaves.

*Q: What support services would CAHOOTS like to see?*

- Low-barrier shelter
- Addiction services, safe injection sites
- Harm-reduction services



- Crisis respites
- Variety of shelter options
- There is a longer, fuller list. It's about empowering people to meet basic needs, build new coping skills, and address triggers before things escalate.

*End of interview/follow-up/next steps:*

We can email CAHOOTS/Tim Black with questions.

Tim Black is allowed to do another hour-long conversation, pro bono, and conversation in the meantime.

CAHOOTS can develop a quote for a year-long consult for our needs (likely somewhere between \$10,000-\$25,000)

## **Other meetings with stakeholders:**

**Domestic Violence Roundtable:** All three subcommittee members joined a roundtable zoom meeting on Oct 8, 2020 and listened to and engaged with the DV roundtable members on what they think works well in Brookline and what they would like to be increased or developed.

## **Notes from telephone call between Anne Weaver and Asantewaa Boykin, RN, *MH First* Director on Dec. 21, 2020.**

Ms. Boykin opened the call by stating that sometimes it can be challenging to differentiate between a person undergoing a mental health crisis and a person undergoing a physical health crisis. That all too often, a person going through a physical health crisis who has a medical history record of mental health issues, may not receive the medical treatment they need because "they aren't believed" by medical staff. She frequently sees this in her work as a psychiatric nurse working in a hospital environment. This is why she co-founded *MH First*, a crisis service and support grassroots organization.

*MH First* consists of support volunteers and a three-person community crisis team.

The three people on the community crisis team include: (1) a crisis interventionist and a safety liaison, who doesn't engage with the person in crisis, but instead engages with police and emergency personnel if/when they arrive on the scene; (2) a RN or EMT; and (3) a person trained in mental health de-escalation and crisis support (might be a licensed professional or might be a peer supporter).

Before a community crisis team goes out, the person who has called in first speaks with a support volunteer who has been trained by *MH First* to engage with the caller and find out the specifics of what is happening, including:

If there is risk to person or persons; any physical health concerns; if there are police or emergency personnel on the scene; and other factors.

If the support person determines that a situation is urgent, then they will dispatch the three-person team to meet with the person or persons in crisis. Sometimes dispatching a team isn't necessary and other plans can be made with the caller, such as creating a safety plan, or scheduling a follow-up phone call or non-emergency visit. Sometimes these phone calls last for hours; the telephone support volunteer will stay on the phone with the caller for as long as needed. There is no time constraint.

Telephone support volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds including medical students, law school students, social workers, registered nurses, and people with lived experience of mental health issues, addiction, and lack of housing.

Ms. Boykin stated that telephone calls are not the most common way that people in crisis reach out to *MH First*. She said that texting is the #1 way people reach out, followed by direct messaging, and then by telephone.

*MH First* will send Lyfts to people in crisis who need transportation to go to a medical appointment or an Emergency Room. The budget for Lyft use is usually crowd-sourced.

*MH First* is only open on Fridays and Saturdays. They tend to receive about 4-5 calls a day per weekend.

*MH First* has developed a one-day training, which is mandated for all volunteers prior to the start of volunteering. This training is based on active listening, de-escalation, and emergency room diversion.

They receive some grant funding from the city of Sacramento, California.

## Appendix S: Research Notes

The subcommittee reviewed over 20 articles and website links and 2 webinars related to community supports and services to VPPC. The focus of the literature review were existing programs which served people in crisis, including non-police crisis service programs, several housing program models, jail diversion models, and the Crisis Intervention Treatment BPD model. Highlighted below are the programs which seemed most relevant to the subcommittee's Charge as we continue our research and evaluation and make recommendations.

### **Non-police crisis service programs:**

CAHOOTS (Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Street): A private non-profit organization which operates via a third-party contract provided by law enforcement. It is located under the public safety arm of the municipal government. CAHOOTS crisis support consists of two-person teams consisting of a medic (a nurse, paramedic, or EMT) and a crisis worker who has substantial training and experience in the mental health field. The teams use trauma-informed de-escalation and harm reduction techniques during their work with a person in crisis. According to CAHOOTS, out of the approximately 24,000 calls that they responded to in 2019, police presence was only required during 250—or approximately 1%—of those calls. (El-Sabawi & Carroll, 2020, p. 26) CAHOOTS estimates that their program has saved taxpayers an average of \$8.5 million a year in public safety costs alone, in part by responding to and ultimately resolving 17% of the Eugene Police Department's overall call volume.<sup>157</sup> Because CAHOOTS also responds to non-emergency medical issues, it also saves taxpayers an additional \$14 million in ambulance transport fees and emergency department treatment costs annually. (El-Sabawi & Carroll, 2020, p. 28)

Gerstein Crisis Centre in Toronto, Ontario: Crisis center, founded in 1989, with a 24/7 community support and mobile team. Trained in nonviolent de-escalation. Peer support. Receives about 30,000 crisis calls a year, and makes about 1600 visits a year to people in crisis in Toronto.

BEST Team: Affiliated with Boston Medical Center. A comprehensive, highly integrated system of crisis evaluation and treatment services to the greater Boston area, including Brookline. Their call center dispatches mobile clinicians to the site of the crisis and also offers information, referrals, and psychiatric evaluations, and has two urgent care centers in Boston. Also offers homeless support services including case management, outreach, and mental health assessments at the Shattuck shelter. As Annabel Lane, social worker in the BPD noted in our interview summarized above, the BEST team only serves those who have insurance through MassHealth or who are currently uninsured in any health plan.

MH First: A community-based response model for people in mental health crisis, located in Sacramento, California. The goal of MH First is "to respond to mental health crises including, but not limited to, psychiatric emergencies, substance use support, and domestic violence situations that require victim extraction." MH First provides "peer support, de-escalation services, and non-punitive and life-affirming interventions to people experiencing mental health crises." Currently operating only as a phone intervention due to Covid-19, MH First volunteer staff include people with lived experience of mental health issues, trained clinical mental health providers, and medical students and residents. Prior to taking crisis calls, volunteer staff receive five initial hours of training designed by mental health clinicians and peer supporters, receive ongoing supervision, and follow-up trainings designed by program staff.

**Housing models:**

Some housing models examined how the “unhoused” population could be assisted by:

The use of parking lots where unhoused people were allowed to park their cars there

The use of public space management - having access to rest rooms, showers, drinking water etc. in parks, libraries, sidewalks and streets.

Educating the public about these strategies in order to reduce calls about this

Calls don't go to the police but to a different line that connect the person with services, outreach, housing specialists, etc.

**Jail diversion models:**

Forensic Assertive Community Treatment (FACT): FACT is a service delivery model intended for individuals diagnosed with serious mental illness (SMI) who are involved with the criminal justice system. These individuals may have co-occurring substance use and physical health disorders. Their needs are often complex, and their disorders are often under-managed and further complicated by varying degrees of involvement with the criminal justice system. FACT builds on the evidence-based assertive community treatment (ACT) model by making adaptations based on criminal justice issues—in particular, addressing criminogenic risks and needs. In this sense, FACT is an intervention that bridges the behavioral health and criminal justice systems. FACT is designed to do the following: improve clients' mental health outcomes and daily functioning; reduce recidivism by addressing criminogenic risks and needs; divert individuals in need of treatment away from the criminal justice system; manage costs by reducing reoccurring arrest, incarceration, and hospitalization; and increase public safety. Like ACT, FACT provides services that are client-focused, community-based, time-unlimited, and delivered by a multidisciplinary team. These services include intensive, continuous engagement Approaches to Early Jail Diversion: Collaborations and Innovations (July, 2019): This study examined pre-booking jail diversion services for people with Mental Illness and Substance Abuse Disorder. The study reviewed a number of community behavioral health programs and law enforcement and emergency programs.

**Crisis Intervention Team (CIT):**

Developed in 1987 in Memphis TN following the shooting death of a 27 year-old Black man who was in a mental health crisis. National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) helped develop the model. 40 hour training model which includes education about mental illness (causes , signs, and symptoms), information on involuntary commitment criteria, communication skills, and de-escalation training. CIT is currently part of the Brookline Police Dept. All BPD officers have been trained in this model, according to Dan O'Leary. BPD is one of the regional training centers for other PDs in Massachusetts. The subcommittee learned more about the BPD model in our interview with Annabel Lane and Lt Paster on Oct 29, 2020 (see above).

**International Programs**

**Sweden:** Mental health ambulance staffed with two specialized psychiatry nurses and a paramedic respond to emergency calls from people with severe mental illness or behavioral distress. Calls from the public are received by an emergency call operator who identifies a mental health crisis suitable for this program. There is some coordination with the police (check detail)

**Finland:** “Housing First” policy for someone who is drug-addicted or homeless. The Finnish Housing First approach was introduced in 2007 as a housing solution for the most vulnerable homeless people. Permanent housing based on a normal lease and individually tailored support services were the core elements in the approach. Increasing the supply of affordable rental housing was necessary. Also, preventive measures were reinforced. Since then, hostels have been converted into supported housing units with independent flats for the tenants and several social housing organisations have provided housing for the programme. New ways to support people and to improve integration in the neighbourhood have been developed.

**England and Wales:** Most police officers are unarmed and more focused on de-escalating the situation using communication and minimal violence.

# Appendix T: Current Social Service Programs and Services

## Current Social Services in and around Brookline:

- **Allston Brighton Community Financial Management Program**  
mailbox@allstonbrightoncfmp.org Free tax preparation, medical debt resolution, credit counseling.
- **Alternatives to calling Police/Boston Resources** (Mutual aid, Medford and Somerville)  
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1jY1TtxtCtxO9F0I7QUKrMnnvSEOBD5CC5WmXq01MyE8/edit>
- **The A.C.E. Collective** (Alternatives to Calling 911)  
[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1G9epQLI5yh\\_Nsl0gRoE5T42J3VXOrS1ImrX3BS3SnWE/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1G9epQLI5yh_Nsl0gRoE5T42J3VXOrS1ImrX3BS3SnWE/edit)
- **The Brookline Health Department** offers resources/call numbers for people to call for mental health, emotional distress, and substance abuse issues. (mental health)  
<https://brooklinecovid19.com/emotional-health-resources/>
- **Brookline Housing Authority** (Employment and ESOL supports for Brookline residents):
  - **Next Steps:** Resume, employment, training, and educational assistance, summer jobs. gwatson@brooklinehousing.org
  - **ESOL** English as a second language classes. dmendola@brooklinehousing.org
- **Brookline Center for Community Mental Health** Counseling, rental assistance and emergency assistance with other basic needs, transitional housing, homelessness prevention, case management. Info@brooklinecenter.org
  - **Safety Net:** Emergency financial assistance for people who live, work, or go to school in Brookline. Safetynet@brooklinecenter.org
  - **BRYT (Bridge for Resilient Youth in Transition) Program:** Run by Center social workers at the Brookline High school for students who've missed a lot of school.
- **Brookline Council on Aging:** On site and Senior Center based programs and services for elderly in health, arts, nutrition and recreation. dbell@brooklinema.gov
- **Brookline Early Education Program:** Day care, home visits for pre-school readiness. beep@brookline.k12.ma.us
- **Brookline Food Pantry:** Free food with three Brookline locations, limited delivery options available for homebound residents. Brooklinefoodpantry@gmail.com
- **Brookline Office of Veterans Services:** Assists veterans with services including annuities, social security, medical care referrals, counseling, educational benefits, emergency funds, job searches, housing, and other services. [bmcgroaty@brooklinema.gov](mailto:bmcgroaty@brooklinema.gov)

- **Brookline Mutual Aid:** Community-based initiative to ensure that everyone has access to essential resources like food, cleaning supplies, medication, childcare, and financial assistance as immediately as possible. [mutualaidbrookline@gmail.com](mailto:mutualaidbrookline@gmail.com)
- **Brookline Recreation Department:** Low cost summer camps, swimming, sports, health & wellness, childcare, trips, & special events. Financial aid available. [recreation@brooklinema.gov](mailto:recreation@brooklinema.gov)
- **Brookline Health Department, Emergency Preparedness Buddies Program:** The EP Buddies Program is free and designed to match volunteer coaches to elder buddies to help them determine their needs in order to improve their preparedness and resilience. [sgordon@brooklinema.gov](mailto:sgordon@brooklinema.gov)
- **Brookline Teen Center:** Teen-driven, drop-in, out-of-school time facility offering an array of programs, activities and events. [info@brooklineteencenter.org](mailto:info@brooklineteencenter.org)
- **Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance:** <https://mhsa.net/> (help find housing)
- **Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless** <https://mahomeless.org/> (help find housing)
- **Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Relations:** Advocates for those who may face discrimination, stereotyping and social injustice. [lgellineau@brooklinema.gov](mailto:lgellineau@brooklinema.gov)
- **Springwell:** On site coordination of services that allow seniors and individuals with disabilities to live at home. [info@springwell.com](mailto:info@springwell.com)
- **Step by Step Supportive Services** to help adults with psychiatric, cognitive, and social disabilities lead meaningful and fulfilling lives. <http://www.stepbystepss.org/>
- **Steps to Success:** Comprehensive support for low-income students in Brookline schools from grades 4 through college. [sts@stepstosuccessbrookline.org](mailto:sts@stepstosuccessbrookline.org)
- **Women Thriving:** Community-based programming to support holistic health and wellbeing of low-income women in Massachusetts. [annbrackett@womenthrivingma.org](mailto:annbrackett@womenthrivingma.org)

## Appendix U: BPD Crisis Call Data

Subcommittee members reviewed BPD data on crisis call codes provided to the Task Force by the BPD.

In the month of September 2020, approximately 119 calls were made to the BPD by, or on behalf of, a person in crisis in Brookline. Of these calls, 14 call codes were for a “confused person”; three were for a “family disturbance”; six were for an “intoxicated person”; nine were for a “psychiatric evaluation”; 17 were for a “medical emergency”; and 59 were for a “well being” check.<sup>17</sup>

The data for September 2020 crisis calls does not indicate the results of the interventions.

In a separate document entitled “Brookline Public Safety Communications Overview,” in 2019 the BPD received 665 call codes for a “well being check” on a person in the community; 179 call codes for a “psychiatric emergency”; 101 calls on an “intoxicated person”; and 51 call codes for “CIT follow-up”.

In 2018, the BPD received 592 call codes for a “well being check” on a person in the community; 166 call codes for a “psychiatric emergency”; 112 calls on an “intoxicated person”; and 74 call codes for “CIT follow-up”.

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<sup>17</sup> Note: It is unclear from the above data if more than one of the received call codes might have been about the same individual in crisis. For example, three of the 14 calls on behalf of a “confused person” were received on the same day, so it is possible that more than one call was made for that same person in crisis.



## Appendix V: Public Hearing Notes

### Vulnerable people and People in Crisis subcommittee Public Hearing Feb 4, 2021

[NOTE: This document is not word-for-word transcribed; many of the comments have been shortened or summarized. Careful attention was made to not change the substance or meaning of the responses.]

26 public attendees

**Gaurav, Brookline resident:** These all sound like great recommendations, especially CAHOOTS. In terms of the process, it would be a shame if this didn't pass. Why don't we already have this? Is the town going to vote for this and if so, when?

**Naomi, Brookline resident:** Thank you for your time and effort and I agree with all of your recommendations. I have been working in homeless services for the last 22 years in different capacities. I have multiple family members with mental health and substance use issues and I know what it's like to have police involved in their lives. I love the idea of the Town creating a social services dept.

Cambridge has a very robust social services department and the value they put into pre-crisis services is very clear.

De-escalation is centered on being respectful and trauma-informed and person-centered and is an important part of the work. Calling the police should be the last resort as many people have had negative reactions to the police in the past. I want to second the recommendation of working with CAHOOTS. I think it would be a great thing for Brookline to explore.

If you have a family member with mental health or substance use issues, you don't want someone in a uniform with all that power showing up as the first responder. You want someone trained in person-centered, trauma-informed de-escalation to show up, not a police officer.

Thank you for your work, I am available to help

**Jody, Brookline resident:** I am a licensed clinical psychologist. I resonate with everything Naomi just said and I agree with all of your recommendations. Thank you for your work.

**Emy, Brookline resident:** Thank you for your hard work in ensuring that Brookline can be a safer place for all of us. I strongly agree with your recommendations that police officers should not be primary first responders. I am speaking from personal experience with family members. In terms of your recommendation that pre-crisis services need to be expanded in order to prevent such crises from occurring, I agree. I think you should push your definition of pre-crisis services a little wider to include things like high-quality equitable education, Medicare for all, and expanded housing opportunities. Universal basic rights that are often the root cause of "crime prevention."

I love the idea of a social services dept but I don't want it to be just a place that just coordinates direct social services. I want it to be a place that also makes the connections between direct services and root causes in our community. For example, to keep track of how many people are in need of "X" direct service and instead of taking that data at face value, the dept can then ask the larger questions of why so many people are in need of "X" direct service and then coordinate solutions with other towns and the state depts and agencies to address these underlying root causes.

**Sam, former Brookline resident:** I want to interrogate the use of “highly trained” individuals in these roles. Maybe we could also use people to serve in these roles who are directly from the community. Maybe think about shifting the frame to not have to rely on any credentialed professionals and instead give the power back to people who know what their needs are and could consult for themselves —if the power was given back to them. Thank you.

**Jeffrey, Brookline resident:** Thanks for all the work you are doing on this. I want to speak from a personal perspective. My dad was a cop and he always said that the hardest work was dealing with domestic crisis situations. He said it was like coming into the movie in the middle, so to speak, wearing a uniform and with a gun. The history of racism also can't be overlooked here. Being a white officer going into communities of color. It's tough for cops; they also don't know what to expect and there is a lot of fear for them, too. They don't know what risk they are going to be put in.

I've been wondering if there is any data that you have been able to get from the BPD about how often they go into such situations. How often they have needed to use police force to be effective in that way. What the outcomes have been. I think that would be really important information to have. It's also a money thing. We are spending money for the police to do things which raises the situation for everyone -- including for the police. It may be a poor use of resources. I hope we can get data from the BPD on that.

**Ryan, Brookline resident:** CAHOOTS sounds like a good idea, as well as increasing pre-crisis supports and the creation of a social services department. I do want to emphasize the holistic approach to public safety, thinking about the entirety of someone's needs and the root causes that might be affecting them.

I just saw in the news that Austin, Texas just bought a hotel to house people without housing. Sometimes it is just that simple; providing housing for people who don't have it. You just have to have the political will to make those decisions. Thank you.

**Donelle, Brookline resident:** Thank you, you are doing crucial work. I appreciate what you are doing.

**Gaurav, Brookline resident:** I think Ryan raised a good point, why not shift money from the police dept to creating housing for people who need it. How much are we spending on the police, how much are we spending on housing? Where can I find that information? Thank you. [subcommittee members directed Gaurav to the Town of Brookline website]

**Donelle, Brookline resident:** Have you been reaching out to community members? What questions do you have for us? Like over here in the Village Way, where I live, how do we get the message out that we are having these meetings and conversations? How can I get people more aware of these meetings and talk about their experiences? In our complex, we are going to start doing zoom public forums, have public forums on concerns in the community. I want to add information about the Task Force in our forum. Maybe have a Task Force member speak?

**Alex, subcommittee member:** There will be a full Task Force public forum on Feb 17<sup>th</sup>. Also, encourage people to send us emails, if they prefer to be anonymous. [Subcommittee provided the Task Force email in chat]

**[Redacted name, due to personal information shared] Brookline resident:** While I don't have any experience interacting with the police in terms of mental health crisis, I do have experience being in the Brookline public school system, particularly at the high school.

Brookline high school is really ahead of the curve in terms of addressing acute mental health, and in terms of meeting students who are experiencing such issues, in terms of meeting them where they are at.

I had severe depression and anxiety in HS which led to me missing a huge amount of school, and, when I was at school, missing a lot of classes. I was part of the BRYT [Bridge for Resilient Youth in Transition] program, which is at the HS. BRYT is a program of the Brookline Center for Community Mental Health and is run by social workers. It's a program where students who have missed a lot of school can reintegrate into the school. BRYT includes SWs and a tutor to help students successfully enter back into school. They are the reason that I graduated high school, because I had these social workers advocating for me and supporting me. Brookline is doing something right with the BRYT program. Why does that support stop when you reach age 18 and when you graduate high school? Why can't we expand it, meet everybody where they are at, have a program that's beneficial and supportive for people age 18 and older?

**Carolina San Miguel, Town of Brookline community engagement strategist:** I just want to introduce myself. My job is to reach out to people, I am here and want to engage with the community. Please feel free to contact me and I am glad to help. Thank you.

**Nathan, Brookline resident:** I support the recommendations of the report, especially the CAHOOTS program. I believe the funding of the police should be reduced and the funding be used to support these new programs. Thank you.

**Eva, Brookline resident:** I don't have anything new to say. I just want to reiterate what people have said already. I support the work this subcommittee has been doing. I grew up feeling scared of the police, I didn't want to call them when dealing with family issues and I think these recommendations are good steps in the right direction.

**Bonnie, Brookline resident, Task Force to Reimagine Policing member:** I want to say that right now is the time to advocate for this work.

Budget season is upon us and this is the time to show up and help support these ideas and the work. We need your voice and your presence to make this work happen. Thank you.

**Raul, Task Force to Reimagine Policing Chair:** I want to make sure everyone knows about what's coming next. Friday morning Task Force meetings from 8:00-10:00 am. Task Force full public hearing meeting on Feb 17 at 7:00 pm. The Task Force will then present on March 2 at the Select Board meeting. Please attend these meetings and share your thoughts.

[End of public hearing]